

**THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIETY:  
A PASTORAL VISION**

**VOLUME 50  
REPORT OF THE FIFTIETH ANNUAL MEETING  
1969**

**OF THE  
FRANCISCAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE  
HELD AT  
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SEMINARY, TROY, N.Y.  
JUNE 2-5, 1969**

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TO THE FRANCISCAN PROVINCIALS AND  
IN BEHALF OF  
THE FRANCISCAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

RALPH DiPASQUALE, O.F.M., PH.D.

*President*

Franciscan Educational Conference

(An address delivered at the 58th meeting of The English-speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor)

According to Vatican Council II, the Apostolate of the Church is to spread the Kingdom of God everywhere, by bringing men to share in the Redemption and, through these men, by bringing the entire world into relationship with Christ.<sup>1</sup> Religious do this in a special way by being more intimately consecrated to divine service than their lay counterparts, and by vitally symbolizing, through their vows, the unbreakable link between Christ and the Church.<sup>2</sup> But they also do this by performing some specific form of service, not necessarily peculiar to their chosen state (for they may share it with laymen and secular clergymen), but one to which they add a unique and Christlike dimension.

One such form of service is the apostolate of education which attempts to direct the human person towards his ultimate goal and toward the good of human society of which he is a member and in whose responsibilities he will ultimately share.<sup>3</sup>

That this apostolate is a legitimate one for a religious has been convincingly argued by Fr. Edward J. Carney, O.S.F.S.<sup>4</sup> He feels—and we agree—that education prepares men for the reception of grace (and hence may be legitimately engaged in by priests and religious), and that religious teachers give a special witness—one which laymen cannot give—to their students.

That the apostolate of education is a legitimate one for Franciscans has been just as convincingly argued by the late Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., who saw a definite correlation between the scientific culture of our Order and its religious and



spiritual life. In other words, in history, when the religious and spiritual culture of the Order is high, so is its scientific culture; whereas when the spiritual culture is at a low ebb, so is its intellectual life.<sup>5</sup> Nor should this surprise us; for the Franciscan spirit—"the spirit of the holy Gospel, lived by the Church of the Apostles, revived by St. Francis and expressed in the Rule as the eternal task of the Order"—must necessarily permeate its intellectual life.<sup>6</sup> As Fr. Philotheus said:

A union between the Franciscan spirit and the intellectual life in the pursuit of studies; a union between the youthful embraces of the ideal of the Holy Gospel and the joy of knowing the truth about nature and God; in a word, a union between Assisi and Paris, is a possibility and a reality.<sup>7</sup>

But does Franciscan intellectualism, if we may call it that, have anything to offer? Can a body of Franciscan educators offer any truly unique dimension to the field of education? We think it can.

Men, unlike animals and things, have a very special position in the world. They can extricate themselves from this life, so to speak, by making themselves present in the past or in the future. For the past is not simply a "now" that was, any more than the future is merely a "now" which has not yet become real, but which will once be.

The future for man is a kind of "becoming" or unfolding, since he is continually attempting to realize his potential and to reach self-actualization and authentic existence. But this developmental process is more of a back and forth movement than a simple forward thrust; for a man can move toward himself in the mode of the future only by simultaneously moving backwards towards his past.<sup>8</sup>

The Order, then, as an organization of human individuals (and very individualistic individuals at that) is inseparably bound up with its view of its former life, of the plans that it formed, of the fortunes that fashioned it, and of the accomplishments and failures it fashioned for itself, is by its very essence a being with a past. Its interpretation of its past is intimately linked with its hopes and aspirations for the future. In fact, it *is* the present self interpreting its past self to its future self.<sup>9</sup>



As a true community, rather than a crowd, it is essentially a product of a time process, having a past and expecting a future. A more or less conscious history, whether real or ideal, is a part of the very essence of a community.

Now some of our contemporaries believe that the world and the Church have enough division already; that what is needed is not more fragmentation, proliferation, and individualization, but more harmonization, unification, and communication. While there is indeed much truth in what they say, we cannot unqualifiedly embrace their view.

All men are certainly inter-related in the world of persons and the world of things. And while this is their natural condition, it is precisely because of this fact that it is very difficult for them to realize their own possibilities as they should. While other men are an individual's companions in the search for selfhood and authentic existence, they unfortunately constitute obstacles to the realization of his true self-actualization. For not being able to escape from "the others," a man may be caught up in the great levelling tendency to think as *one* thinks, feel as *one* feels, judge as *one* judges, while yet considering himself to be wholly original.<sup>10</sup>

In other words, as the great American philosopher Josiah Royce says, there is tendency in our society to:

read the same daily news, to share the same general ideas, to submit to the same overmastering social forces, to live in the same external fashions, to discourage individuality, and to approach the dead level of harassed mediocrity.<sup>11</sup>

And we might add that there is also a tendency in our society to massify, so to speak, our intellects, to abandon our auto-centric positions, and to compulsively amalgamate our talents and traditions. Certainly we must pool our resources, and we are under obligation to form a part of the intellectual community; we must also contribute to the field of research. But must we be swallowed up in the process? Must independent schools be absorbed by state and regional systems? Must organizations like the Franciscan Educational Conference be devoured by the larger National Catholic Educational Association or any other associa-

tion, which may itself one day be engulfed by the National Educational Association or some still larger organization? We do not believe that it must happen, nor that it *should* be allowed to happen. For our view of any human society is that it constitutes:

a whole which is irreducible to the plurality of its members, a new unity which is not decomposable and yet whose collectivity tends to be immanent in its parts and the parts, immanent in the collectivity. It is a reciprocal relation which could be defined as a mutual participation of unity in plurality and plurality in unity.<sup>12</sup>

We cannot, therefore, overlook the unity, but neither should we neglect the plurality. The cause of the community must certainly be championed but so must the rights of its members. The large community deserves to be loved, but not at the expense of the smaller community or of the individuals in it.

It is our contention that pluralism within the world community, in the nation, in the Church, and even in the field of education, is not only necessary, but desirable. It is human and good that there are many nations in the world, many states or provinces in a nation, and many refreshingly unique individuals in the smallest group. It is comforting to know that even within the Church—as the Mystical Body of Christ—there is enough pluralism to prevent the absorption of individuals within an ever-swelling social organization. Our Church, in fact, is a beautiful mosaic of laymen, priests and religious of different orders and congregations, who with their racial, political and national differences form a harmonious society with Christ at its head. Our Order is, always has been, and hopefully always will be, characterized by divisions which, while at times tension-provoking, nevertheless give eloquent testimony to its vigorous life and influence. Today it is divided into various circumscriptions, constituted of several provinces and custodies; and each of these in turn is made up of a number of local communities. Yet each of these separate categories or entities, from the circumscription down to the smallest local community, "is sufficiently unified, to have a true consciousness of its unity, to feel a pride in its own ideals and customs, and to possess a sense of its distinction."<sup>13</sup>

Our Order has its own customs and ideals, its own traditions, beliefs and aspirations; all of which it cherishes and promotes. Is it wrong for it to do so? Does it thereby cause disunity or disloyalty towards a higher society—to the Church, the country or the world community? Or is it perhaps performing a useless function, losing itself in a reduplication of effort? We do not think so.

False sectionalism, which disunites, or isolationism, which does not care, are indeed evil, because they involve disloyalty to the human family. But true loyalty to a legitimate smaller community, rather than causing disunity, prevents men from becoming mere cogs in the giant stereotyped mechanism of the social order, or cattle-like members of one of its numerous herds, or mere vehicles for carrying out its various influences.<sup>14</sup> Loyalty to a specific community, such as the Order itself, or to the provinces within the Order, allows for the realization of their members' initiative tendency, while preventing them from being reduced to the drab level of slavish obedience to social uniformity. Give friars their own domain and they will hopefully enhance its landscape, develop it in every possible way, keep out harmful influences, and accept into it whatever they consider of worth.

Given modern communications media, popular government and industrial and economic trends, the future problem of our world will become more and more the problem of how to escape from the domination of the crowd. But if organizations such as the Franciscan Order exist, if its provinces continue to flourish, then it will always be possible for small groups of men to gather together for thoughtful discussion and thus avert the blind instinct to follow the crowd. For a smaller group, even though devoted to the larger, remembers its own ways, ideals and aspirations, even when the larger community is being actively carried away towards badly thought-out goals.

Give (a man) the local community that he loves and cherishes, that he is proud to honor and to serve make his ideal of that community lofty, give him faith in the dignity of his province, and you have given him a power to counteract the levelling tendencies of modern civilization.<sup>15</sup>



It is precisely this we would have you do. Help us to form a strong Franciscan Educational Organization, one that English-speaking friars everywhere will be proud to honor and to serve and to call their own. Help us to preserve our identity in an ever-more-complicated social structure. How?

### What You Can Do Specifically—

(1) Besides your financial backing, which of course we need and have received (having doubled our request for funds this year), we want you to help us to encourage attendance at the Franciscan Educational Conference through circular letters and oral communication. We wish you to help us thereby to attain our particular object which is:

- (a) To encourage the spirit of mutual cooperation among the Franciscan families of North America and other English-speaking areas, relative to education;
- (b) To advance by study and discussion the Franciscan Educational work in all its departments and to stimulate the creation, conservation and communication of Franciscan scholarship;
- (c) To offer means and incentives towards the advancement of learning and the pursuit of various Franciscan Apostolates.<sup>16</sup>

(2) Membership in the Franciscan Educational Conference is open to all members of the Franciscan Families of North America and other English-speaking territories, while *active* members are those friars and brothers who are in actual attendance at a meeting of the Franciscan Educational Conference. Moreover, the Prefects of Studies of the various Franciscan Families are *ex officio* delegates to the Franciscan Educational Conference as representatives of their particular jurisdiction.<sup>17</sup>

Despite this, however, membership in the Franciscan Educational Conference has fallen off noticeably in the last few years.

What we would have you do about this deplorable condition is:

- (a) See to it that the Conference is attended by your Provincial Prefect of Studies or at least by his representative;
- (b) Send at least one student representative from each province or custody (that he may become acquainted with Franciscan



- scholarship and acquire a pride therein), thus assuring continuance of future members;
- (c) Encourage annual attendance at the Franciscan Educational Conference by the Provincial Third Order Prefects; the President of the Seraphic Society for Vocations or his representative; the heads of the Franciscan Institute and the Academy of American Franciscan History or their representatives;
  - (d) Allow other interested friars under your jurisdiction to attend the annual meeting, especially members of your board of education.

(3) We ask you also to promote the Franciscan Educational Conference and its activities through your *provincial newsletters* and other publications.

(4) We intend, moreover, that an annual mimeographed report of the educational trends in the various provinces be sent out under the auspices of the Franciscan Educational Conference at the beginning of each school year. And we hope that this report will be compiled from answers made to a questionnaire sent by the Executive Board of the Franciscan Educational Conference to each Provincial Curia. We ask, therefore, that you see to it that the questionnaire is adequately and quickly answered.

(5) We also wish to enlist your support and cooperation in compiling each year a list of the recent publications of the friars of your provinces and custodies.

(6) Finally, may I make bold to suggest that Provincial Ministers themselves, when not officially occupied, lend the prestige of their office to this vital apostolate of the Order by attending the annual meetings of the Franciscan Educational Conference.

As an epilogue, I offer you this final observation. If, through lack of sufficient interest and support, the Franciscan Educational Conference is permitted to die a natural death, it will be a sad day in the annals of Franciscan history, for it will signal the end of the Franciscan school of thought, at least within the English-speaking circumscriptions. No doubt, you recall the spirited rivalry among the medieval schoolmen, particularly Thomists versus Scotists, as to which system had the more to offer to the advancement of Church doctrine. "Tollere Thomam est tol-

lere Romam," said the Dominicans. "Tollere Scotum est tollere totum," replied the Franciscans. This was more than mere intellectual joshing—it reflected a genuine pride and deep-seated conviction regarding the solid and valid contribution of the respective schools. Is it perhaps time to revive our old pride in the Franciscan *weltanschauung*?

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity," No. 2—*The Documents of Vatican II* edited by Walter A. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Guild Press, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, No. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Declaration on Christian Education, No. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "The Apostolate and Christian Education," *NCEA Bulletin*, February, 1969, pp. 34-39. Fr. Carney is Vice-President of the NCEA Major Seminary Department.

<sup>5</sup> *The History of the Franciscan School, Part I, Alexander of Hales* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: mimeographed, 1943), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Brock, "Introduction," *Existence and Being* by Martin Heidegger, pp. 91-3.

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from J. Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, II, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. the writings of Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, and Royce, and others.

<sup>11</sup> *Race Questions*, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> G. Gurutch, *La Vocation actuelle de la sociologie*, p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> J. Royce, *Race Questions, Provincialism and other American Problems*, p. 61.

<sup>14</sup> J. Royce *Philosophy of Loyalty*, p. 82.

<sup>15</sup> J. Royce, *Race Questions*, p. 79.

<sup>16</sup> Revised Constitution of F.E.C., adopted August 8, 1962.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

## FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF FRANCISCAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

IRENAEUS HERSCHER, O.F.M.

While an enumeration of facts may become tedious at times, I have the happy privilege of surveying the first fifty years of the Franciscan Educational Conference. With your kind indulgence, I shall do this in the hope of showing how much has been accomplished thus far, and also with the view of inspiring others to continue this excellent cooperative effort.

As our mind's eye turns to the scenes of the FEC's beginnings we are aware of preliminary efforts made as far back as July 8, 1914, when the first Conference of Seraphic Colleges was held at West Park, Ohio, now known as Cleveland.

The second such meeting was held at St. Joseph's Seraphic Seminary, Callicoon, N.Y., August 21-21, 1918. To it were invited rectors and vice-rectors of several Seraphic seminaries. The purpose was to discuss common problems.

At the opening Conference, Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., was elected Chairman, and Fr. Urban Freundt, O.F.M., Secretary. It was agreed to discuss all matters informally. In all, seven sessions were held, devoted to the Religious Training of our students, and the seminary curriculum. It was also suggested that in addition to administrators and professors of the seraphic colleges, Prefects of Studies should also be invited. For obvious reasons it was recommended that our seraphic colleges be affiliated with the Catholic Educational Conference, and be referred to as seminaries.

In accord with the final resolution at this conference, the Very Reverend Provincials, at *their* annual meeting, held at St. Clement Monastery, St. Bernard, Ohio, agreed to enlarge the scope of the Conference. And thus they announced the 1919 or First of the Franciscan Educational Conferences. "This 1919 conference shall be held after the meeting of the Catholic Educational Association, which takes place in St. Louis, Mo., June 23-27." It

was to cover the entire course of studies as pursued in the several provinces of the Friars Minor. "Each Province will be represented by: the Prefect of Studies, a Lector of Theology, a Lector of Philosophy, the Rector and Vice-Rector of the Preparatory Seminary, or their respective delegate, and any other friars whom Fr. Provincial may delegate.

It was also agreed that "the Conference may discuss any subject bearing on the literary aspirations of the Friars."

Having specified the time (June 29-July 2, 1919) and place (Tertiary Hall, adjoining St. Anthony Friary, St. Louis) of this First Franciscan Conference, its topic was "The Franciscan Seminary Curriculum."

In his opening address, Fr. Thomas Plassman briefly outlined the purpose of the Franciscan Educational Conference:

- to bring about a greater unity and action, and greater co-operation among Franciscan Educators of this country.
- to unite in a voluntary association as many friars as possible who are engaged in educational work.

He also enumerated some of the advantages of such an organization:

- it extends the educational benefits of those friars attending the Catholic Education Association.
- it brings together friars who have mutual interests and by cooperation share the results of their experience.
- it also enables the friars to restructure their educational system on a scientific basis of progress and efficiency.
- such united efforts on the part of the friars will stimulate and extend their various activities.
- it will also enable them to contribute their humble share to the advancement of learning in accordance with the ideals and traditions of the once eminent Franciscan School.

While it is not possible to cover each of the forty-nine conferences held since that memorable first one, I wish merely to mention that at this first one, Father Thomas gave the key-note address (text, pp. 44-5) and the Constitution of the FEC was adopted (text, pp. 165-167). The following were elected first officers of the new organization: Fr. Thomas Plassman, O.F.M., St. Bonaventure, N.Y., President; Fr. Martin Strub, O.F.M., St. Louis,



Mo., Vice-president; and Fr. Urban Freundt, O.F.M., Cincinnati, Ohio, Secretary.

As is manifested by the increasing size of the printed annual reports, the FEC blossomed forth: its membership came to be shared by the Capuchin Friars in 1921 and by the Friars Minors Conventual in 1922. At a later period the Conference became international in scope, enrolling First Order provinces in Canada, England, Ireland and Australia.

During its Silver Jubilee it was still further expanded to include the clerical Third Order Regular, and the provinces of Mexico. Then the Franciscan Brothers, and later the Friars of the Atonement were added to its membership. All in all, it was an inspiring picture to see the members of the various Franciscan Families sit down and discuss their common problems, share their experiences, and engage in mutual admiration. What a pleasing picture a meeting such as this must make to Our Holy Father St. Francis looking down on the assembled members of the Franciscan Educational Conferences.

## Publications

Beginning with the proceedings of the 1919 Conference, annual Reports have been published. These have been quite uniformly outstanding for scholarship. Interesting and informative, numbering almost fifty volumes, many of them are of value to this day. To show the variety of subjects treated, and their relevance, the complete list is given below: date, topic, and place where held.

## FRANCISCAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1 (1919) Curriculum of the Seminary.           | St. Louis, Mo.      |
| 2 (1920) Latin. English. Ascetics.             | Allegany, N.Y.      |
| 3 (1921) Duns Scotus                           | West Park, Ohio     |
| 4 (1922) History, Franciscan<br>Hist. Bibl.    | Herman, Pa.         |
| 5 (1923) Science.                              | Cleveland, Ohio     |
| 6 (1924) Language studies.<br>Fran. Bibl. Ins. | Mount Calvary, Wis. |
| 7 (1925) Sacred Scripture.                     | Cincinnati, Ohio    |

- 8 (1926) Franciscan asceticism.
  - 9 (1927) Franciscan preaching.
  - 10 (1928) Classics.
  - 11 (1929) Education.
  - 12 (1930) Franciscan school of philosophy.
  - 13 (1931) Franciscan psychology.
  - 14 (1932) Seraphic seminaries.
  - 15 (1933) Modern thought.
  - 16 (1934) Sociology.
  - 17 (1935) Social progress.
  - 18 (1936) Franciscan history of North America.
  - 19 (1937) Religious instruction.
  - 20 (1938) The youth movement.
  - 21 (1939) Sacred theology.
  - 22 (1940) Catholic English literature.
  - 23 (1941) Economics.
  - 24 (1942) Basic trends of the Franciscan school.
  - 25 (1943) Existence and knowability of God.
  - 26 (1944) St. Bernardine of Siena.
  - 27 (1946) Franciscan view of missiology.
  - 28 (1947) Librarianship and the Franciscan Library.
  - 29 (1948) Guidance through Franciscan spirituality.
  - 30 (1949) Christian moral guidance.
  - 31 (1950) Law and government.
  - 32 (1951) Franciscan esthetics.
  - 33 (1952) Problems in education.
  - 34 (1953) Theology in Daily Life.
  - 35 (1954) Mary in the Seraphic Order.
  - 36 (1955) Nature the Mirror of God.
  - 37 (1956) Renovatio et Accommodata: Franciscan Life Today.
- Floyd Knobs, Ind.  
 Athol Springs, N.Y.  
 Hinsdale, Ill.  
 Allegany, N.Y.  
  
 Herman, Pa.  
 Detroit, Mich.  
 Carey, Ohio  
 Marathon, Wis.  
 Hinsdale, Ill.  
 Garrison, N.Y.  
  
 Santa Barbara, Calif.  
 Allegany, N.Y.  
 Rensselaer, N.Y.  
 Chateauguay Basin, Can.  
 Detroit, Mich.  
 Herman, Pa.  
  
 Quincy, Ill.  
  
 Washington, D.C.  
 Burlington, Wis.  
  
 Washington, D.C.  
  
 Santa Barbara, Calif.  
  
 Westmont, Ill.  
 St. Bonaventure, N.Y.  
 Milwaukee, Wis.  
 Loretto, Pa.  
 Wappingers Falls, N.Y.  
 Washington, D.C.  
 Watkins Glen, N.Y.  
 Washington, D.C.  
  
 Santa Barbara, Calif.

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 38 (1957) Franciscan approach to theology.              | Saginaw, Mich.        |
| 39 (1958) Mind of Modern Man.                           | St. Bonaventure, N.Y. |
| 40 (1959) Communications and the Franciscan Message.    | Dayton, Ohio          |
| 41 (1960) The Family and Franciscan Ideals.             | Quincy, Ill.          |
| 42 (1961) Franciscan Financial Administration.          | Loretto, Pa.          |
| 43 (1962) The Holy Eucharist and Christian Unity.       | Garrison, N.Y.        |
| 44 (1963) The Elements of Franciscan Formation.         | Troy, N.Y.            |
| 45 (1964) Justice in the Modern World.                  | Louisville, Ky.       |
| 46 (1965) Rediscovery of Scripture.                     | Santa Barbara, Calif. |
| 47 (1966) The Role of Religious in the Church Today.    | Hinsdale, Ill.        |
| 48 (1967) Seminary Education after Vatican II.          | Montreal, Canada      |
| 49 (1968) Theology in Dialogue.                         | Seoulsville, Ohio     |
| 50 (1969) The Christian and Society: A Pastoral Vision. | Troy, N.Y.            |

In 1924 the FEC issued in addition to the *Report* the first number of its companion publication *Franciscan Studies*, a monograph series which appeared at irregular intervals. These twenty-one volumes are devoted to such topics as Franciscans and Science, Franciscan Biography, Education and History. In some cases they are expansions of subjects treated at the annual conferences, but too large for inclusion in the *Report*.

In March 1941 the *Report* and *Franciscan Studies*—Monographs were replaced by a quarterly periodical known as *Franciscan Studies*. The fourth or December number was devoted in main to the papers submitted at the annual meeting of the Conference [FHF 22 (Dec. 1, 1943) p. 321.] For five years (1941-45) this was published at St. Bonaventure under the auspices of the Franciscan Education Conference. Then the Franciscan In-

stitute fell heir to *Franciscan Studies* which, in 1963 became an annual.

One of the "fringe benefits" of *Franciscan Studies* was the inclusion of an annual bibliography of published writings by Franciscans. This list grew too large for the quarterly, and culminated in a "Bibliographical Survey of Franciscan Books and Pamphlets (1939-1959)" published in the 1959 volume of the FEC Report.

Also published under the aegis of the FEC were two editions of a *Franciscan Educational Directory*, and a *Cumulative Index* to the first fifteen volumes of the Reports.

### Types of FEC Meetings

Most of the annual conferences were composed of approximately twelve scholarly papers prepared and delivered by specialists in their respective fields. The animated and helpful discussions that followed were also published in the annual report.

In more recent years it was found helpful to have several General Sessions, followed by smaller discussion groups. These reported their findings at the next general meeting, thus giving everyone the benefit of a summary covering all these group discussions.

### Sectional Meetings

In most cases, during the days of the FEC various special groups, with special interests and problems, held sectional meetings. At these they discussed certain administrative areas, such as those peculiar to Prefects of Studies, Guidance Counselors and Psychologists. As one of the practical results of the 1947 FEC, devoted to the subject of Libraries, a motion was made and carried to establish a Franciscan Library Section. This has been under the aegis of Fr. Donald Bilinski, O.F.M., a scholarly, typical Franciscan librarian, whose middle initial is "Service". He had a remarkable way of promoting scholarship and of for more than fifteen years, and it has proven a helpful source of information to both Friar and Sister Librarians. A Franciscan Subject Heading List, a union List of Franciscan Literature, and



other helpful library tools have evolved as a result of the 1947 meeting devoted to Franciscan Libraries.

### Presidents of the FEC

It may seem superfluous—he is so well known here—yet it is appropriate to mention the first president, Father Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., or Father Tom, as he was affectionately known to all of us.

He was not only an exceptional scholar, organizer and smooth catalytic agent (pardon the term, but it is the first word that comes to mind when I try to spell out his ability to elude cheerful cooperation from all those with whom he came in contact.) He had a remarkable way of promoting scholarship and of obtaining whole-hearted working agreements from diverse minds with challenging views.

Listen to him as he addresses the First Franciscan Educational Conference in St. Louis fifty years ago:

“Our main purpose in choosing this particular time and place was to associate ourselves with the work of the Catholic Educational Conference. . . .

“There are many reasons why we should now retire to our monastery and discuss ‘inter fratres’ our own educational problems. We wish to be conservative in conserving, for the future generations of the Order in this country what belongs to the Order, and for which it has labored and battled in the past.”

After praising the labors of the Franciscan pioneers in their work to save souls, he stated: “We venerate their memory . . . we owe it to them now that we are in a position to accomplish more in other fields, because we have the material and the numbers whereby we can pursue higher studies, and thus will accomplish more if we have the energy and zeal displayed by our forebears.”

For twenty-eight years he directed the destinies of the Franciscan Educational Conference, and his work lives after him.

FR. PIUS BARTH, O.F.M. (1947-1953, 1961)

The second president I had hoped would be present here today.

By Divine Providence, work in New York City brought him north from his labors as Executive Vice-President of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, but the sad death of his Provincial Superior has changed his plans. He too brought scholarship and administrative ability to his position as head of the FEC.

FR. IGNATIUS BRADY, O.F.M. (1954-5)

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., had the good fortune to preside over one of the most interesting Conferences—that of the Marian Year. As one will notice, the Report for that year is the largest of them all, a real tribute of the Franciscans to their Queen.

FR. MAURICE GRAJEWSKI, O.F.M. (1956-1960)

Fr. Maurice directed the destinies of the FEC from 1956 to 1960. The organization lost a fine president when higher studies and a call to Rome ended his term, and today we find him deeply engaged in administrative work at Franciscan Headquarters in the Eternal City.

FR. ERNEST LATKO, O.F.M. (1962-1968)

Fr. Ernest guided the FEC while engaged in his favorite field of Sacred Theology at Christ the King Seminary, West Chicago, Illinois. He has shown his ability not only by generously giving of his time and talents during his six-year term as president, but subsequently has also accepted the duties of Editor of the *FEC Report*.

FR. RALPH DiPASQUALE, O.F.M. (1968- )

Our gloriously reigning prexy has taken up the challenging task of injecting renewed life and vigor into our organization. This is evident from the preliminaries and the arrangements he has made for this Golden Jubilee meeting.

It may be significant to mention that several of the executive officers of the FEC were later on appointed to high offices in their respective Provinces, some of them being elected Provincial (as was Fr. Pius Barth), others being chosen as Minister General, as in the case of Fr. Basil Heiser, O.F.M. Conv., and still another

elected to the office of Definitor-General (as in the case of Fr. Maurice Grajewski).

While honoring and expressing appreciation for what the Presidents of the FEC have done, we are not unmindful of the contribution made to the organization by its Vice-Presidents. This debt of appreciation we also gladly pay to the members of various committees who have served from time to time during these fifty years.

Our thanks as a group are also due to the various Provinces and Commissariates and their Houses of Studies, who extended invitations and seraphic hospitality to our Conference during the past five decades. As the list of fifty meetings shows, the FEC received several "A.B."s from a number of Provinces. By "A.B." we mean "asked back": a generous note, not overlooked. To each and everyone of the institutions, both those on the eastern seaboard, midwest and west coast: the FEC is grateful.

### Secretaries and Editors

There is yet another group of faithful laborers who deserve great praise and thanks. It is the various Secretaries and Editors who have kept pencils sharpened and produced the finished product of the annual conferences. Many have thus labored generously over the past fifty years. Among these are: Fr. Urban Freundt, O.F.M., Fr. Felix Kirsch, O.F.M. Cap.; Fr. Claude Vogel, O.F.M. Cap.; Fr. Marion Habig, O.F.M.; Fr. Sebastian Miklas, O.F.M. Cap.; Fr. Donald Wiest, O.F.M. Cap.; Fr. Campion Baer, O.F.M. Cap., and our presently serving Fr. Hermes Kreilkamp, O.F.M. Cap.

Yoeman service as editor of publications was performed by Fr. Marion Habig, O.F.M. and Fr. Sebastian Miklas who did double duty at times, as secretary of the conference and editor of the publications. Special praise to them.

### Treasurers

While it may seem somewhat out of place to mention a *Treasurer* in connection with a Franciscan endeavor (and there were none mentioned in the early days of the organization) nevertheless this office becomes a practical necessity.

After succeeding Fr. Marion Habig, O.F.M. in this office in 1947, the present incumbent has found this burden light. Making use of an annual appeal directed to the Very Rev. Fr. Provincials and Commissary Provincials, I have found the response both prompt and generous for the most part. While I have always acknowledged contributions, many a time I was pleased to add the old Latin expression: *bis dat qui cito dat*—he gives double the amount who gives quickly.

I am happy to report that we are solvent, that there is a sum of some \$7000 in the bank waiting to be used in payment for the *Reports* still to be printed, and for such necessary expenses as may be connected with our Golden Jubilee Conference.

Last but not least, our thanks go to our Superiors one and all, who made possible the formation of this Franciscan Educational Conference. By their constant encouragement, especially with their financial support, they have made the first fifty years a source of admiration. May the coming years give evidence of appreciation and reason for continued success.

### Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference

After attending the sessions of the FEC for three years (1948-1951) Franciscan Sisters held annual meetings of their own under the sponsorship of the FEC (1952-1962). These were held during the Thanksgiving Day recess.

It was at the eleventh such meeting, held at Marian College, Indianapolis, Ind., that a Planning Committee was chosen for forming a distinct Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference. This new organization has its own "working rules" and officers for planning the annual meeting.

The theme of the Sisters Conference is usually the same as that considered by the FEC that year. Occasionally a friar whose paper presented to the FEC was also of interest to the Sisters, might be asked to deliver the same paper for the benefit of the Sisters at their annual conference.

### In Conclusion

As we commemorate the first fifty years of the FEC, we cannot help but pay a tribute of praise to the Founding Fathers, and

to all who have given so generously of their time and talents to promote this wonderful organization. This I mention with a realization of the truth of the saying: "Appreciation for past favors is a pledge of future blessings!"

With due apologies to Madison Avenue, we can all say of our fifty-year young Franciscan Educational Conference: "You have come a long long way, FEC."



## THE FUTURE

GERALD DOLAN, O.F.M.

Fifty years ago, during the first annual meeting of the fledgling Franciscan Educational Conference which was held in St. Louis, June 29, 1919, the Secretary stated:

[The Conference] will bring together in mutual consultation and co-operation the lectors and professors of the several departments in order to reach a full understanding as to the exact scope of each department, and to reconstruct our educational system on a scientific basis of progress and efficiency.<sup>1</sup>

And, some few lines later, there occur words which have as deadly a ring for us today as they must have contained then: "... in accordance with the ideals and the traditions of the once eminent Franciscan school."<sup>2</sup>

Times have changed. From those first gatherings which were concerned with matters and curricula of internal schools, the whole area of Christian thought is undergoing a paroxysm of change which will, I am sure, affect generations of Christian men and women. At this particular moment of our Conference, a moment which is coincidental with that paroxysm out there, I cannot help but listen for echoes of fifty years ago: "... once eminent Franciscan school." I think the corresponding question was well put to the Ministers Provincial and the Custodes of the American Friars Minor some months ago by Father Ralph DiPasquale:

But does Franciscan intellectualism, if we can call it that, have anything to offer? Can a body of Franciscan educators offer any truly unique dimension to the field of education?<sup>3</sup>

Fr. Ralph's optimistic reply was: "We think it can."

Our question this evening does not concern the propriety of the intellectual vocation within the Franciscan life and tradition. Insofar as history has shown this to have been for some years a

noble reality in the life of the followers of St. Francis, we hold it to be so. Father Philotheus Boehner has written:

A union between the Franciscan spirit and the intellectual life in the pursuit of studies; a union between the youthful embraces of the Holy Gospel and the joy of learning the truth about nature and God; in a word, a union between Assisi and Paris, is a possibility and a reality.<sup>4</sup>

Rather does our question this evening concern the prospects for the Franciscan Educational Conference. After fifty years we find ourselves embroiled in the general wave of self-examination which is the lot of all Christians during these post-Conciliar years. Some steps have already been taken, for we see the move to educational amalgamation and confederation. In view of the larger learned societies—the National Catholic Educational Association and the still larger National Education Association—can the FEC survive? But, even more important, if the thread of an intellectual tradition has truly been broken—and I wonder if we can say that which characterized the Franciscan School has been broken—or, if what might be called Franciscan in our efforts is but a 'harkening back' to a day that was, are we not in fact bereft of a tradition, and should we claim to be the depositories of such. I would hazard the affirmation that the Tradition is still living. But I do not think that it is an exclusive possession of Franciscan educators. I also suspect that it is in close kinship with the American stream of Pragmatism. It seems to me that the movement of American thought is not in fact far removed from the Franciscan tradition or from the concern of groups such as the Franciscan Educational Conference.

The Declaration on Christian Education of the recent Council states that: "[the Church] intends . . . to have it seen more profoundly how faith and reason give harmonious witness to the unity of all truth."<sup>5</sup> The purpose is that: "The Christian mind may achieve . . . a public, persistent and universal presence in the whole enterprise of advancing higher culture."<sup>6</sup> However, this desired Christian-Catholic presence to the enterprise of advancing higher culture does not, in its overall thrust, demand the stamp of uniformity. There have been, and there will be, many visions of the

relation of the world to the Gospel Message within the total Christian assent in faith to Christ. You have, for example, the earliest days of the Church. East and West theologized differently concerning the Mystery of the Divine Trinity. You have the growth of the Monastic Theology of the Carolingian West. You have the two great medieval thrusts of Aquinas and Bonaventure/Scotus.

We have the great names of today. My attention is immediately focused upon those whose thought has brought about the thought of Vatican II. There is, however, the temptation to be massified into a single view of things. Divergence is, I think, needed today between thinkers who, each in his own specialty, strive for a fuller understanding of man and of God in revelation and human effort. The richness of the contemporary theological renewal has resulted, in great part, from implementing the "return to the sources." If we, as bearers of a Franciscan message in the United States—for the *Seventies* and the *Eighties*, and beyond—we need to come to a renewed awareness of what has formed our tradition as we attempt to move forward.

The vast area of the contemporary knowledge explosion must receive our attention. To this point the interests of Philosophy and Theology seem to have been paramount in the F.E.C. The Franciscan contribution should be a multi-faceted one. Physical Science and Technology, History and the Social Sciences, Literature and the Arts—whatever will contribute to the growth of culture and the humanization of life—should be the concern of the F.E.C. insofar as all of these can and should be integrated into a Christian and Franciscan vision of life (if, indeed, the two can be separated). I do not see the FEC to have the same interests, but in a minor mode, as does the Catholic Theological Society of America. Its interest needs to be co-extensive with whatever scientific endeavor serves the good and the true. If the FEC is going to work, it must—in the contemporary jargon—be where the action is.

Our students are beginning to benefit from Philosophical and Theological Clusters in various cities. There are untold benefits to be expected from this development. Will there be a certain levelling, or syncretic approach to the Philosophical and Theological disciplines. The challenge concerns the personal influence of

the Friar-Professor who has discovered and accepted the validity of his tradition, and who can integrate what is valuable in it with the contemporary problematic .

Should the FEC be a quiet little corner of academe where select people treat of esoteric problems, it will quickly find itself cut off from life. It will be uninterested and uninteresting. We cannot assume the role of a sage. There was a time when "The Proceedings" were not only awaited, but welcomed as positively contributing to various fields of endeavor. Today?

Should we not consider the responsibility of stimulating the Friars in all disciplines, encouraging and supporting them in their specialities? Can we not look to the new responsibilities of Continuing Education for Ministry and in the Religious Life? And, what of the Sisters who depend upon our various jurisdictions?

There are today many questions facing us all. As one whose interest is Theology, I can call attention to the problem of the individual human conscience in a computerized society, conscientious objection, the American Experience and Religious Life (are we facing American problems with European solutions?), the formation of a Christian humanism. And there are more—all of them timely and asking for our attention. And their request is for the practical, and this is something which is close to the voluntarist thrust of Franciscan thought. It may be that we are losing an idea of who we are. If we would presume to serve the Church in the service of men in search of the good and the true, we need to find ourselves as Christian thinkers of all sorts who are Franciscan and Americans.

The program designates this period as one for discussion. I have never thought discussion to be uni-directional. Perhaps, after some reflection, we might address ourselves to various areas of importance and interest.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the First Annual Meeting of the Franciscan Educational Conference, I* (December, 1919), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> R. DiPasquale, *Report to the Franciscan Provincials and Custodes*, April, 1969, page 2.

<sup>4</sup> P. Boehner, *The History of the Franciscan School, Part I, Alexander of Hales*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. (Mimeographed), 1943, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration on Christian Education* "*Gravissimum Educationis*," October 28, 1965, §10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



# A CHRISTIAN ONTOLOGY OF MAN AND ITS APPLICATION TO CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Gabriel Marcel's  
Metaphysic of Faith and Hope

OWEN BENNETT, O.F.M. CONV.

The Christian philosopher-theologians of the thirteenth century sought to work out a causal structure theory of reality such that it would allow for divine and human freedom in an otherwise necessary system of the world. This they conceived to be their historic task, confronted as they were with a completely necessitarian philosophical system of causal explanation of the universe, that of Arabian Aristotelianism, especially as it was brought to its final form by the great commentator on Aristotle, Ibn Roschd, or as the Latins called him, Averroes. The universe of Averroes was a solid block of intelligible necessity in which everything that happened was the reflection of the intelligible forms in the mind of the first unchanging cause, the supreme intelligibility, who, in thinking himself in the solitude of his own perfection, determined to the last detail all that was, all that could be.<sup>1</sup>

Confronted with a philosophy of such rigidly determined causal structure—a philosophy worked out by the greatest of the Arabian thinkers and integrated with the whole body of the accepted science of the time—a Christian thinker like St. Thomas Aquinas saw his own intellectual task as one of attempting to re-interpret Aristotle—the fundamental Aristotle—in such a manner as to reconcile his principles with the truths of the Gospel. In his theory of the subordination of causes Aquinas presents a Christian Aristotelianism in which freedom is safeguarded—the sovereign freedom of God and the dependent freedom of the human creature. Aquinas proposes to integrate divine and human freedom into an intelligible system of cause and effect. God is the primary cause upon which all existence, nature, activity, and order in creation

depend. All creatures are secondary causes, which means that they are totally dependent in their exercise of their causal efficacy upon the influx of the causal activity of the primary cause. And in seeking their end, all secondary causes are totally subject to the supreme government of the primary cause. Nothing can happen outside the will of the primary cause. Permission of evil is always subordinated to a higher good. In this system there are free secondary causes which produce their effects freely, and necessary secondary causes which produce their effects necessarily.<sup>2</sup> The sovereign divine freedom is able to intervene at any time, and at times does intervene, in such a way as to produce effects outside the ordinary mode of operation of the causal structure. The mode of the divine activity can be conceived by our minds only by analogy, Aquinas says. That is to say, no creature is able to comprehend the mode of the divine causality. We form only a most imperfect notion of the divine activity by way of analogy with the activity of creatures—ourselves especially.<sup>3</sup>

Since the scholastic movement of the thirteenth century Christian philosophy has been generally identified with the Aristotelian metaphysic of causality. Gabriel Marcel, while agreeing profoundly with the defense of freedom and personal responsibility and immortality which was the primary intention of St. Thomas and of all the Christian scholastics, nevertheless has consistently refused to have anything to do with a causal metaphysics. Instead he considers causality to be proper to human technical activity—a bio-teleological concept. Consequently, he rejects the extension of the causal concept to transcendent reality as a basic instance of the confusion of problem with mystery. It was the causal god of the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophical tradition, Marcel declares, whose death was truly announced by Nietzsche. This announcement was another way of saying that man, when he reflects upon himself as free and personal, simply cannot think of himself as the effect of a cause. God is inconceivable as a cause. He reveals himself to us as infinitely more than a cause: he reveals himself as personal and as creator.<sup>4</sup>

Marcel has faithfully carried on this work of criticism and reconstruction throughout the intervening years, and throughout this period he has become more and more insistent on the unaccept-

ability of the causal approach in metaphysical inquiry. He writes this most emphatic declaration in 1955:

I think we should have done with the idea of God as Cause, of a god concentrating in himself all causality, or even, in more rigorous terms, with all theological usage of the notion of causality. It is precisely here that Kant has shown us the way, perhaps without himself proceeding to the final consequences of his discovery. It could be, I will say in order to resume the thread of my argumentation, that the God whose death Nietzsche truthfully announced was the God of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, god the prime mover.

And, a few lines further on:

If we claim to make of the idea of cause a transcendent use, we arrive at a dead end, or, which amounts to the same thing, we get lost in a labyrinth. The words "transcendent use" have here an extremely precise meaning: they mean a use which extends beyond the domain of instrumentality strictly speaking—that is, that in which man exercises his mastery—or even any other domain conceived, arbitrarily or not, as analogous to the first. But man, the principle of instruments, can no doubt not think of himself as the product of transcendental instrumental action. If he is a question for himself, it is perhaps above all to the extent that it belongs to him to recognize that it is he as agent who is at the center of any causal representation. It is to be feared, indeed, that the idea of causality, whatever effort modern philosophers may have made to spiritualize it, to unfetter it, to detach it from its primitive anchors, is inseparable from the existence of a being provided with instrumental powers: it is, in short, bio-teleological.<sup>5</sup>

The rejection of the transcendent use of the idea of cause does not, in Marcel's intention, negate or exclude an order which is the fruit of the creator's work; but the dependence and the order are seen by Marcel as most intimately loving and personal, as concrete and particular, as perfectly reconciling freedom, originality, and creativity with a divinely-given and a divinely-watched-over development that is beyond human capacity to comprehend in abstract conceptualization and generalized theory. It is this deep and intimately personal order that we must be aware of at all times,

that we must take into account at all times. We must not be surprised to encounter many signs of it—events and happenings that have deep personal meaning but that lie completely beyond the range of any causal theory. We must also be active in the promotion of the development of this order, for it is part of the divine intention that we share in the order itself and in its growth to fulfillment, in and through our encounters with one another at the truly personal level, the deep level of the intersubjective.<sup>6</sup>

The order sought through the interpretation of reality in terms of the Aristotelian causal structure is an order of "truth" which is impersonal, abstract, conceptual, general, and logically necessary and communicable. It is, in a word, an order which can be humanly possessed and transmitted through logical analysis and demonstration. In an essay entitled "Mon propos fondamental," written in 1937 and included as the opening chapter of the volume *Présence et Immortalité* published in 1959, Marcel declares that his own philosophical labor is oriented towards very different aims. The truth towards which philosophical research is directed is, in Marcel's view, a truth that cannot be possessed; in no manner can it be considered or treated as something we *have*: it is always that in which we participate, the participation of our thought in the mystery of being which surrounds it, penetrates it, supports it, and enlightens and nourishes it. The mystery of being is also the mystery of freedom. To seek to reduce the philosophy of being to a causal structure theory is to treat the mystery of being as if freedom and personal uniqueness and depth were to be put aside in the interests of logical clarity and necessity. It is to approach reality as if all that is deepest and most real were to be passed over, and the human desire for intellectual possession by means of a satisfying theory considered to be of paramount importance. Over against this anxiety for logical and conceptual satisfaction through a theory of causal structure, Marcel proposes the need of a continuing metaphysical inquietude or uneasiness which spurs us on towards a continued search of our own center, and the center of others also, in the exploration of the implications of the unique and the singular, the personal and the free, in our human situation as we live it in the concrete.<sup>7</sup>

In light of the above it is clear that the relation of faith and



philosophical reason, in Marcel's thought, that of rival claimants for sovereignty over a contested area. There is an activity of the human mind which is oppositely orientated from the response of faith: the scientific activity which seeks to dominate the material milieu and to subdue the earth in the interest of man's material needs. Marcel has frequently pointed to the danger of the exclusively technological spirit—of the degradation of man to which a worship of scientific technique inevitably leads. In a conference delivered in 1930 he declared that the technological spirit presents to many people in the modern world the gravest obstacle in the way of a religious view of life.<sup>8</sup> In his book, *Les Hommes Contre L'Humain*, published in English translation under the title *Man Against Mass Society*, he treats at great length of the harm that resulted for man and society from the exclusive attention to scientific techniques in the western world during the last century. When man refuses to recognize the mystery of being that envelops him and sustains him, Marcel declares, and instead

seeks to understand his condition by using as his model the products of his own technical skill, he infinitely degrades himself and condemns himself to deny, that is, in the end, to destroy, those deep and basic sentiments which for thousands of years have guided his conduct.<sup>9</sup>

But philosophical reason, for Marcel, is orientated always towards faith. There is absolutely no question of philosophical reason looking upon its progress as a matter of taking over areas previously considered the domain of faith. "...there is a connection," writes Marcel,

which it is the philosopher's duty to underline with the utmost emphasis, the connection which binds together faith and the spirit of truth. Whenever a gap begins to open between these two, it is a proof either that faith is tending to degenerate into idolatry or else that the spirit of truth is becoming arid and giving way to ratiocinative reason; and I think that we have made it amply clear that this split is contrary to its nature, to its own proper impulse. The spirit of truth is nothing if it is not a light which is seeking for the light; intelligibility is nothing if it is not at once a coming together and the nuptial joy which is inseparable

from this coming together. The more I tend to raise myself towards this Uncreated Light, without which I am left in the dark—which would mean that I have no being at all—the more I in some way advance in faith.<sup>10</sup>

The Aristotelian causal metaphysics is orientated towards the technological spirit. It would make of philosophy an objective content of the human mind, to be mastered and handed on as a human possession. (It would not even be subject to the continual openness to basic reformulation of positive science, but would have a sort of eternity and transcendence of its own.) For Marcel philosophy is a reflection carried on continually within the response of faith and intersubjective availability. There is intellectual fulfillment, but it is never by way of possession, never separated from the free response of faith and adoration before the transcendent Thou to whom we belong. There is a transcendent certitude—a sharing in the eternal; but it is always a free certitude, a lived certitude, always being renewed in the free response of the whole person—a participation that lives always tributary to a light that enlightens only those who freely believe.

"A light that enlightens." The light shines for all, not as a material light but as the fundamental gift that we can recognize in our personal existence. This gift contains in itself a call from the Giver. We can refuse this call. If the call is refused, the light does not enlighten. The "free certitude" that fills the believer who responds seems, to the one who refuses the response, to be escape, illusion, "nothing but." (Philosophical suicide," Camus calls it, in the *Myth of Sisyphus*.) And there is no merely logical argument that can refute such a refusal. It can be shown that the refusal leaves man in an "independence" that is meaningless and that renders existence itself absurd. Marcel does this at some length in his chapter on "Freedom and Grace" in the second volume of *The Mystery of Being*. But mere logic is powerless to lift man out of meaninglessness and absurdity. Only freedom can do this in the deliberately chosen response to the fundamental gift. Marcel sums all this up in a lapidary passage in *Being and Having*, pp. 120-1:

It surely behoves us to renounce, once and for all, the naively rationalist idea that you can have a system of affirmation valid for thought *in general*, or for *any consciousness whatsoever*. Such thought as this is the subject of scientific knowledge, a subject which is an idea but nothing else. Whereas the ontological order can only be recognized personally by the whole of a being, involved in a drama which is his own, though it overflows him infinitely in all directions—a being to whom the strange power has been imparted of asserting or denying himself. He asserts himself in so far as he asserts Being and opens himself to It; he denies himself by denying Being and thereby closing himself to It. In this dilemma lies the very essence of freedom.

Although Marcel refuses to follow the scholastics of the thirteenth century in their acceptance of the Aristotelian causal structure, he is in deep agreement with their basic Christian attitude and insights. As a philosopher of faith Marcel is closer to the basic stance of the medieval thinkers, all of whom philosophized as theologians and believers, than a neo-scholasticism would be which pretended to a purely objective approach to the transcendent. Marcel's aim might be stated as seeking to re-think the scholastic approach in a manner more deeply faithful to its own insights, that is to say, in a manner that makes room for philosophical knowledge, but that does not permit the human desire to know to become inimical to faith and freedom and personal dignity through the illicit attempt to extend the structures of causal thinking beyond their properly human technical sphere.

An age of faith did not require that the implicit presuppositions of its seemingly independent objective philosophical reasoning be made explicit. But as the human philosophical movement followed more and more demandingly that "desire to know" of which Aristotle speaks in the opening sentence of his *Metaphysics*, the need for the explicit recognition of the role of faith in man's approach to the transcendent became more and more apparent. The history of Western thought since the later medieval period constantly underlines this need. While the great medieval intellectual ferment produced an immense harvest in the steadily growing achievements of the *scientific* movement all the way from the fourteenth century down to the present age, the desire to extend

the domain of objective knowledge in the *philosophical* realm seemed directed of its very nature to work against the acceptance of the basic truths of Christian faith. Despite the enthusiastic confidence of Descartes that his new way of philosophizing in the light of objective reason alone would be a great aid to Christian belief and would overcome the sceptical mood of the Renaissance, the whole philosophical excursus from Spinoza to Sartre has proved the opposite. The neo-scholastics have criticized the modern systems and have countered the threats to Christian faith by showing, as their thirteenth century predecessors had done, that there are alternative ways open to the believer of viewing reality. But these other ways which are open to the believer are only open because the believer, as believer, is willing to respond freely in faith to the mystery of freedom, divine and created, which mystery could never be reduced to objective intellectual possession.

Gabriel Marcel, in the tradition of existential thinkers represented in the past by figures like St. Augustine, Pascal, and Kierkegaard—and reflected in some measure in the thought of the great medieval Franciscan masters<sup>11</sup>—urges the necessity of a more perceptive philosophical approach. In the concluding chapter of the first volume of the lectures published under the title, *The Mystery of Being*, Marcel calls attention to the deep need for an existential approach to philosophy today, in an age which has gone to the opposite extreme from that age in which the attitude of faith was simply taken for granted—the age of the thirteenth century scholastics. Philosophy today cannot think to fulfill its obligations by merely fitting Christian dogmas into an objective structure of a world conceived along Aristotelian lines, even corrected and up-dated in the light of modern scientific theories. Philosophy must go much deeper into the human subject and his personal being and relationships. Philosophy has to penetrate into its own existential subject-matter. Its task is to reflect within the deepest act of its own enlightened freedom and to invite man into the encounter with the Absolute Presence. Its work is a modest and humble work, but full of hope and clear-eyed expectancy. It is the work of a privileged precursor, a work of preparing the way for that which is and can only be a gift—the gift of the Absolute Thou. Only in this way will philosophy speak



to the deep needs of the present age. Only in this way will philosophy grow into the realization of its own authentic essence.<sup>12</sup>

It has been urged against Marcel's criticism that the causal approach need not be rejected in metaphysics if it is properly purified and properly understood according to the demands of metaphysical analogy, as in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. Thus understood, it is argued, a metaphysics of causal structure is perfectly compatible with a philosophy of freedom, both human and divine. It could be answered to this contention that, in any case, the causal approach is the longest way around, beginning with the general and abstract and getting to the concrete particular and the free person only at the end of its exposition, and even then by means of many qualifications and reservations which appear to many as seriously questionable evasions of the necessary consequences of the premises. More fundamentally, though, it is very doubtful, to say the least, whether any degree of conceptual purification can render the causal concept applicable to the creative activity of God. It seems, rather, that in the attempt to stretch the concept so as to cover activities so infinitely different we are led inevitably towards an anthropomorphism which is inimical to both metaphysical understanding and religious faith. Reflection of the text of the *Summa Theologiae* itself could lead us towards a recognition of the inadequacy of the causal approach. This is not surprising; for even though Gabriel Marcel speaks of the death of the God of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition—the prime mover—nevertheless the emphasis he places on the concrete and personal in his approach of the mystery of being, and his opposition to the spirit of abstraction, is really at the very heart of the authentic scholastic and Thomist teaching on God.

St. Thomas Aquinas and the other scholastics used the causal language and categories of Aristotelian thought; but nothing could be further from the spirit of abstraction than St. Thomas' account of the divine creative activity. There is no better exposition of the ineffably personal, concrete and particular character of the creative knowledge of God than the treatment of the divine thought in the fourteenth question of the First Part of the *Summa Theologiae* and the treatment of the divine will, love, providence and power in the nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-second and twenty-

fifth questions. The infinite difference between the divine creative knowledge and activity and any created activity could not be set forth more emphically. One might say that St. Thomas Aquinas himself has provided the best of arguments against the inclusion, under one notion, of activity so infinitely other as the divine and the created; he has set forth in detail most important reasons why it is so dangerously misleading for human thought to attempt to think of the activity of the infinite, omnipotent, and all-providing creator as first creative source and transcendent good. Gabriel and created activity.

The defenders of the analogical validity of the causal concept in our approach to God will say that unless we admit this validity we shall not be able to think of the divine activity in any way at all, except to say that there is dependence of all that is on the creator as first creative source and transcendent good. Gabriel Marcel would answer that this is precisely what human thought must recognize: that it *is* impossible for us to comprehend in any way the mode of the divine activity beyond the recognition, in the light of faith and metaphysical reason, that all beings depend on Him Who is Being in the highest and fullest sense, and that this dependence is most intimately concrete and particular, absolutely basic and total. From the side of God it sees a creative love, whose attentiveness, care and solicitude are only imperfectly reflected in the deepest and most unselfishly sacrificing instances of created love. We express this when we call God the creator, the giver of all good gifts, the peace beyond understanding towards which we yearn. But as soon as we begin to try to think of God as a *cause* we introduce a fundamental deformity into our thought about the divine; we become victims of the most subtle forms of anthropomorphism, by introducing the general and the abstract into our thought about the infinitely personal and concretely particular wisdom and love and power of God, the mysterious particularity of which is expressed in the words of Jesus in the Gospel when he spoke of the heavenly Father's providential care over every detail of His creation: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered." (Mt. 19: 29-30.)

One of the characters of Graham Greene's play, *The Plotting Shed*, observes paradoxically that since God is omnipotent there are many things He cannot do. The all-powerful creator cannot fail in any slightest aspect of the work of perfect love. He cannot be negligent. He cannot begin a work and leave it unfinished. He cannot be heedless of detail. He cannot oversee the general aspects of His work, while leaving the particular concrete details to subordinates. He cannot be like the Maker in the *Timaieus* of Plato and delegate the production of the lesser parts of the world to lesser gods. (*Timaieus*, 41.)

Being omnipotent, He cannot be anything but totally responsible for all that He does—responsible to the smallest detail, to every last particular, and responsible from being to end. The very notion of dependence on anything outside His omnipotent, all-responsible love is excluded. Whatever the omnipotent Love does must be done with total attention, without dependence on anything outside His own power. There *is* no other power which the omnipotent Love does not continually and totally create and sustain.

Such reflection renders apparent the anthropomorphic abstractionism of the Mathematician-God and the Divine Architect of the seventeenth century and eighteenth century theists and deists—the God who took care of the great wheeling systems of the stars and the heavens, and the mathematical direction of the processes of nature, but who could hardly be thought of as descending to insignificant concrete particulars or as stooping to concern himself with the little prayers and problems of humble and obscure people, especially when they prayed to him to set aside the ordinary workings of his own mathematical and structural laws. The theists and deists were putting the limitations of human intelligence—its abstractness and generality—in the place of the mysterious ways of the omnipotent creator.

There are no instruments, no independently given orders of reality, of which the omnipotent creator may make use as man makes use of the powers of nature and of artificial instruments. The omnipotent God does indeed grant a participation in his power to his creatures, but it is by its very essence a participation which means that it can only *be* and be *exercised* so long as he

sustains it. That which is participated can never be or act except it be and act by and through the power of that in which it participates. And that power—the creative, sustaining presence of divine love, is most intimate and concrete and particular, as love cannot but be.

Omnipotence is not the power that dominates from a proud and unapproachable height, nor is it a power (like the Hegelian *Geist*) that moves men like pawns to achieve world-historical ends. Omnipotence can only be the power of taking infinite pains—the power to care for, and never to be absent from the being that depends—the power of subsisting essential love. Gabriel Marcel speaks of God as the Absolute Presence and as the Absolute Thou, the only one who is a person in the strongest sense of the word; for he alone is never absent, he alone confronts the whole of history and takes complete responsibility for all of it.<sup>13</sup>

If God calls us to be his cooperators, he must give the very gift of freedom by which we respond to his invitation; he must sustain us to the end if we are to persevere in fidelity. And even though he does not force our wills but leaves them master of their own decision, he himself cannot turn away from his responsibility, since there is no other who can be the giver of every gift and the sustainer of every fidelity. He is the One who will always "be there," as he said to Moses.

The mystery of the reality of divine creative freedom calling to the created freedom and granting to the latter the power to freely respond is not expressible in any sort of causal structure. Such a structure is a spurious projection into the real of an abstraction—an imperfect human way of conceiving the mystery of divine activity—a way derived from man's own bodily use of instruments. The mystery of reality is a symphony of omnipotent creative love in which every note of each participant is most sensitively and carefully prepared and called forth by "him of whom we should not perhaps say that he conducts the symphony, but that he *is* the symphony in its profound and intelligible unity; a unity in which we can hope to be included only by degrees, through individual trials, the sum total of which, though it cannot be foreseen by which of us, is inseparable from his own vocation."<sup>14</sup>

The thirteenth century in the Christian West was an age of



faith. The historic task of the philosopher-theologians of that day was to make a place for science in that age of faith—to show that an age of faith was not opposed to the development of science, specifically, the philosophy-science which had been handed down from the Greeks, mainly through the Arabian world. St. Thomas Aquinas and his contemporaries set out to show that one need not give up his Christian faith in order to make room for such intellectual structures. It was only towards the close of the thirteenth century that the Christian thinkers of the West began to ask themselves about the absolute validity of these structures (although St. Thomas himself had already pointed out the hypothetical character of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic astronomical theories). That the late medieval period was at once an age of philosophical scepticism and scientific progress is in itself an indication of the 'bio-teleological' character and orientation of causal thinking.

The late twentieth century is anything but an age of faith. We must accordingly see our own historic task as one of speaking of faith and freedom in a world that is tempted to despair because the imperious demand to know objectively and to control technologically has all the destroyed the willingness to acknowledge anything beyond its power to possess and dominate. We must speak to a world that needs to know of a freedom that is not "freedom" to extend even further its scientific control, but freedom to transcend the narrow limits of human science and its causal determinisms and to respond to the presence of God in faith.

In an age when the development of scientific technology threatens to expel from human consciousness the awareness of the mystery of the divine presence (and the accompanying awareness of the mystery of the dignity of the human person), we must strive to fulfill our own historic task by insisting on the limits of all human intellectual structuring once it passes beyond the recognition of the fundamental dependence of the existing world of space and time upon its omnipotent creator.

The dialogue between faith and scientific culture will not be helped by the mistaken effort to develop a common idiom of communication in terms of a transcendently valid causal system. The

history of modern philosophy and science is a continuing proof of the opposite. If there is to be fruitful dialogue between men of faith and men of science it can only come about with the abandoning of such philosophical pretentiousness, and with the recognition that the mystery of being in which they find themselves as fellow human pilgrims cannot be objectivized, but can only be approached in the humility and patience of a metaphysic of faith and hope, a metaphysic wherein intellect is never separated from freedom. and where the spirit of truth is united in nuptial joy with the response of faith. In the atmosphere of such an approach there will also be a welcome for all the other aspects of human culture. The creative artist will find himself at home, delivered from the feeling of the absurdity of existence; for he will find himself, not in a de-humanized world projected from scientific abstractions, but in a divine-human world order where freedom and individual uniqueness are divinely intended and humanly welcomed and valued. In such an atmosphere questions of morality will receive human and living treatment, with a constant awareness of the exigences of the concrete situation. At the same time the moral and religious life itself will be understood in its mysterious depth, never as a mere conformity to extrinsic and general norms, but as a sincere and deeply conscientious response to the One who loves man and calls him always to the growth of that love in the very depths of his soul, and who gives also the light and strength to heed that call and respond to it.

There is a threefold practical application flowing from the reflections of the metaphysic of faith and hope.

1. The individual person, in his concrete historical situation, is of basic ontological importance—in the conduct of his individual life, in each and all of his free decisions. Marcel speaks of the "non-contingence of the concrete particular."<sup>15</sup> I am not an abstract self, a transcendental ego, a pure reason. I am an incarnated, historical being. I am not a detached spectator of a world of ideas, or of a process of rational dialectic. I am a living, breathing participant, called to labor in the fulfillment of the mystery of creation. I am not an ontological isolate, looking out from some imagined Olympus of the spirit. I am with-the-Other. I am before the Absolute Thou in the depths of my being; and I am with

my fellow pilgrims on a life-journeying in which we all are called (by the Absolute Thou) to be responsible for one another, and to be continually searching out and fulfilling more perfectly that co-responsibility by our mutual availability—our *disponibilité*.

This co-responsibility is a call at all levels. I am called at the level of world-historical decisions—to the extent that I can bring my influence to bear upon these. In the present age of the emerging layman and developed communication the whole world is becoming more aware of this responsibility. But co-responsibility is present at all levels in the entire human community—social, economic, academic—in the local neighborhood, in the family, in all personal relations. It would be a grave error to consider these last as of less importance. Being with each other at the deepest personal level of inter-subjectivity is an essential prerequisite for solid and lasting progress at the wide-reaching public levels. “We do not belong to ourselves,” Marcel reminds us.<sup>16</sup> No escape can be mine—Stoic, Epicurean, Hegelian, or Sartrean—If I truly wish to know who I am, and what is my meaning and my destiny. I do not belong to myself. I am called in my personal depths, before the Absolute Presence, to be for the Other, and to give myself freely throughout my journeying through the world of space and time to the attainment of the deep purposes that lie immeasurably beyond the ephemeral and passing, beyond “the beggarly instantaneity of pleasure”—purposes which are the ineffable aims of omnipotent and all-caring creative love, in the light of which every detail is important and every person an irreplaceable mystery, a unique and special creation.

Jean-Paul Sartre talks of an absolute freedom—a freedom absolved of all responsibility to any Other—an impossible freedom of an impossibly alienated *pour-soi*. Sartre’s freedom has no weight. It is a meaningless cry of defiance arising out of a despairing personal emptiness. The freedom of the metaphysic of faith and hope is quite the opposite. It is a freedom that is always responsible to the One who is Present and who calls. It is a responding freedom—a freedom filled with ontological weight, a weight so great that we could not take it on ourselves alone, so great that we could not, and cannot carry it by ourselves. It must

always be given to us; we must always be asking for it; we must persevere in faithful response to it.

2. This is the second aspect of our individual personal ontological importance. We are so important in God's work of creative love that we can only fulfill our responsibility through a gift that is continually given to us, when we seek it, ask for it, and accept it by our own response. The call that is made to me in my personal depths is a call to transcend what is merely self-regarding and self-seeking, to go beyond what is merely common sense and self-preservation. It is a call to become more than I am—to create myself. The most urgent inner need of my personal being is to respond to this call.<sup>17</sup> Yet I do not have it within myself alone to do so. I cannot create myself. I cannot become more than I am. I cannot transcend myself, unless it is given to me to be able to do so. Freedom—human freedom—is always a gift, a gift that is offered to me in the very call that I receive. The actual achievement of human freedom is impossible without that gift, which is the divine gift of grace. Marcel is convinced "that it is only in relation to grace that human freedom can be defined in depth." He declares: "... freedom is no doubt essentially the acceptance or refusal which it is up to us to mark in relation to grace—this refusal, moreover, always being able to disguise itself in a fallacious neutrality. The important thing is simply to recognize that freedom cannot any more than grace be translated into a language of causality."<sup>18</sup>

I must continually seek this gift, asking for it in prayer. My fidelity and my absolute confidence in prayer is the expression of the authentic depth of my faith. My very act of praying is my existential rejection of determinism, just as the readiness to accept causal determinism as the root of all human activity is "an active misunderstanding of what we are,"<sup>19</sup> an active rejection made "at the expense of my own being."<sup>20</sup>

Thus we see the role of freedom in our approach to our own freedom. William James was inspired by Charles Renouvier's declaration that the first act of our freedom is to believe in our freedom. Marcel carries this into a deeper level of recognition when he tells us that the first act of our freedom is to believe that it will be given to us if we ask for it and accept it.



3. This leads us to the third and final aspect of our individual, personal ontological importance. We need the gift of God in order to enter daily into the *exercise* of our freedom. But there is something further: If we neglect to ask for this gift, seeking it in the humility and patience of faith, we shall fail, not only to fulfill our profound inner need for self-creation, but also to recognize the kind of demand that freedom makes upon our *understanding*. For the response of freedom always demands a stretching out of our understanding towards the recognition of forms of self-transcendence which, while eminently in accord with the most enlightened human self-understanding, are nevertheless always beyond what is merely logical and reasonable in the sense that they would be conclusions rationally arrived at by the entire scientific community on purely objective grounds. Marcel declares on this point: "The truth is, sacrifice—and I have in mind naturally the most complete sacrifice, that of a man who lays down his life—is essentially creative. So much so, in fact, that it is in danger of falsifying its own nature if it reflects on itself in an incomplete fashion; attempts, that is, to interpret itself in merely rational terms. One might say that it is of the very essence of self-sacrifice that it is not able to give a rational account of itself, or rather that all its attempts at self-rationalization are fatally inadequate."<sup>21</sup> Again he writes: "There is no shared ground on which common sense and the hero or martyr could meet; they are like two axes that can never intersect. In itself, sacrifice seems madness; but a deeper reflection, the secondary and recuperative reflection of which we spoke earlier on, enables us, as it were, to recognize and to approve it as a worthy madness. We understand that if a man were to shrink from such madness, he would be falling below himself. The truth seems to be that in this special case there is no middle ground between the sub-human and the super-human."<sup>22</sup>

In all of this, Gabriel Marcel, the concrete philosopher of faith and hope, is telling us that rationalization and common sense cannot make a place for freedom—for true freedom which is response to grace. He is saying that left to itself the inner dynamic of human science tends to causal determinism. Science left to itself seeks to reduce the mystery of reality to objective formulations that can be rationally possessed. But man transcends science. Man

is free; or rather man is called to be free; and he must continually stretch out towards the mystery of freedom in his response of faith and prayer. This is a salutary reminder in an age of dialogue. If we would fulfill our responsibility in the symphony of divine freedom in which we are called to be a part, we shall indeed need candor and courage and freedom and openness in our dialogue; but our dialogue will not be truly open and free unless it is always a dialogue that transcends the *merely* rational and is led by the Spirit of God—unless it is a dialogue carried on always in faith and hope.

### A Note on Freedom and the Moral Law Taught by the Magisterium

I do not wish to conclude these reflections without adding a more explicit comment concerning the relevance of the metaphysics of mystery to the moral order as proposed and defended by the teaching authority of the Church. The recognition of the mystery of being and of the order of divine and human freedom transcending the objectivizing capacity of human reason is not at all inimical to the recognition of the order of morality constantly taught by Christian and Catholic tradition. His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical letter, *Humanae Vitae*, reminds us that the order of morality taught by the Church comprises "the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical" (*HV.*, No. 18). The Holy Father declares that the order of morality taught by the Church is "that law proper to a human life restored to its original truth and conducted by the Spirit of God. (*HV.*, No. 19). It is only when the human intellect finds joy and illumination in its willing response of faith that such an order of morality can be truly understood and accepted. For such an order cannot be reduced to the level of merely rational possession. Instead it calls for a constant stretching out of human reason beyond that which man could attain by his own unaided reflection, a stretching out towards a divinely enlightened understanding of the capacities of the human spirit. Pope Paul VI speaks of the necessity of persevering response to God's grace in "serious engagement and much effort" if the teaching of the encyclical is not to be considered "difficult or

even impossible of being put into practice.”

He declares:

The teaching of the Church on the regulation of birth, which promulgates the divine law, will easily appear to many to be difficult or even impossible of actuation. And indeed, like all great beneficent realities, it demands serious engagement and much effort, individual, family, and social effort. More than that, it would not be practicable without the help of God, Who upholds and strengthens the good will of Men. (*HV.*, No. 20)

Clearly, the Pope is speaking of an order of morality that goes far beyond any adequate expression in terms of abstract generalizations. He is speaking of a living communication, a free, creative, personal response. He speaks of a dialogue of grace and freedom, between the believing, hoping, freely responding creature, and the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving Spirit of God. This order of living communication contains that “great, beneficent reality” which the rational arguments strive to express and defend; but it cannot be reduced to the limits of such arguments: it overflows their bounds as the life of Christian freedom exceeds and overflows all merely rational expression.

### A Note on the Objectivity on the Medieval Scholastics

The statement was made above that the great scholastics were closer to Gabriel Marcel in their basic stance than they were to a certain kind of neo-scholasticism. The case could be argued somewhat as follows. The approach to the existence of God in a purely objective philosophy, i.e., a philosophy based on the evidence of a reality apprehended by the human intellect without any response of faith to be acknowledged Presence, can be studied best if we begin with the thought of those thinkers who philosophized simply as philosophers, without any adherence to a religious teaching of revelation—in other words, if we begin with the ancient pagan philosophers. In the view of these thinkers God, or the divine element in reality, is never conceived as being in communication with, or answering the prayer of individual human persons. God is never conceived of as creating reality, or even as knowing every aspect of reality in a way that goes down to the particular and

the individual as such. The individual person and the individual life and destiny is not of primary importance. According to the *Phaedo* of Plato, or the *Enneads* of Plotinus, the *philosopher* may attain to a state of contemplation beyond the present life, but if he does so, he does so as one who has been fortunate enough, *qua* philosopher, to understand the true nature of reality. (And in the view of Plotinus the ultimate attainment of contemplation most probably means the merging of the individual consciousness into the universal One.) The great mass of men who are unfortunate and are not philosophers are of no value in the over-all view of reality characteristic of Platonist and neo-Platonist thought. And even though the divine element is thought of as producing order even though the divine element is thought of as producing order work against such order and harmony, it is never a question of free and personal activity on the part of God, and the order never extends down to the particular direction and destiny of individual lives. In Aristotle the divine self-thinking thought is the supreme exemplar of untroubled intellectual contemplation, so untroubled that the changing world (which strives to become as like as possible to the supreme exemplar) never even comes into the awareness of the supreme intelligence. The disorder of the world would, in Aristotle's view, flaw the untroubled tranquillity of the perfect thought.<sup>23</sup>

Thus the purely objective intellectual approach of the ancient pagan philosophers arrives at the conclusion that the intelligible order of reality demands a purely actual, perfect and necessarily existent intelligence as the source and maintainer, in some way or other, of the existent order recognizable in the empirical world. But this intelligence, and the order maintained by it, are never declared to be personal and free. When this purely objective approach is confronted with a religious view of reality that speaks of God as personal and free—as present, as aware of and responding to created, free persons—a great gulf opens up between the two views. The free recognition, by faith, of God as free, personal Presence instantly introduces questions and difficulties which are beyond any attempted solution in terms of a purely objective philosophy. The whole order of intelligible necessity set up by the reflective labors of the objective philosopher is challenged in



such a way that it is a fight to the death. There is simply no way in which true peace and understanding can be attained between the two. The issue may be obscured for a time, but sooner or later the choice must be faced: the decision must be made in favor of faith, or the response of faith rejected as philosophically untenable. Freedom—of God, or of man—cannot find a welcome and a home in a purely objective philosophy. The entire history of the relations between religious faith and freedom on the one side, and purely objective philosophy of any sort on the other, bears out this fundamental conflict. The admission of freedom—of a free creator-God in living communication with free, created persons—is a dagger pointed at the very heart of that sort of objective philosophy which proposes to proceed to the full explanation of the real in the light of evidence open to the intellect alone, i.e., to the intellect of man without any relation to freedom or faith.

The issue may be obscured for a time—in the mind of an individual thinker, or in the minds of many thinkers in a generation. In a "Christian Aristotelianism" like that of St. Thomas Aquinas the opposition between faith and a purely objective philosophy was obscured by the introduction of positions of religious belief to deal with fundamental difficulties. Thus, in the article in the First Part of the *Summa Theologiae* presenting the objective demonstration that God exists, the basic objection is raised that if God is thought of as infinite and all-powerful Good (as a Christian must think of God according to faith), then it is impossible that any evil should be present in the world dependent upon Him. And the answer is given in a quotation from the *Enchiridion* of St. Augustine: "Since He is the supreme Good, God would in no way permit evil to be in His works, unless He were so omnipotent and good as to draw good even out of evil."<sup>24</sup>

But this most important answer to the most fundamental objection against the objective demonstration is an answer that does not approach God "objectively"; rather, transcending all objective understanding, this answer approaches God with the religious acknowledgement of the sovereignly free and benevolent personal creator. This free response of faith to the free self-revelation of God is always at the living center of all the statements and reasonings about the divine will and the divine freedom in the *Summa*

*Theologiae* of St. Thomas, as it is in any truly Christian thinking about God and about creation and the relation of the creation to the sovereignly free creator.

Again, the fundamental opposition between the purely objective philosophical approach to reality and the religious approach to the divine Presence is masked in the Christian Aristotelianism of St. Thomas by the theory of metaphysical analogy. According to the theory of metaphysical analogy we are able to extend our concepts to speak philosophically about God, since they signify in God a reality in a divine mode infinitely beyond the mode in which we know that reality in our experience. We can speak to God's attributes, but when we do so we simply do not understand the mode in which they are true of God. Nevertheless our knowledge has some validity since every being must bear some resemblance, however remote, to the principle on which its being depends. A purely objective thinker would accept all this so long as it referred to an order that was intelligible in exclusively objective terms, even though the complete objective understanding of it demanded an intelligence superior to man's intelligence. Spinoza would make this sort of intellectual "submission." The principle to which adherence is demanded by the objective thinker is that *there is nothing superior to sheer intelligence, i.e., to intelligence taken exclusively without any reference to love or freedom*. Such a principle necessarily implies an order of explanation in terms of general principles: it explicitly excludes the intelligibility of the free and unique particular. [It might be noted here that Christian philosophy conceives of God (analogically) as pure subsisting intelligence, but intelligence which is really identical with pure subsisting love and freedom. The divine Being is thus recognized to be infinitely ineffable, infinitely irreducible to any exclusively objective understanding, and expressible only in a plurality of divine Persons.] Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas and any Christian thinker would not accept the principle of *exclusive* intelligibility, but would consider metaphysical analogy as applying also to love and freedom and mercy and personal uniqueness. Again, such an understanding of analogy is based on an approach to God as free and loving personal Presence, infinitely exceeding

any possible reduction to the categories of an exclusively objective understanding.

A thinker like Hegel, on the contrary, would employ all the Christian and religious terminology, but always with the reservation that what is considered at the "religious" level as free and personal must be transcended and expressed objectively at the true philosophical level. This means that, for Hegel, good and evil and personal freedom have a merely "religious" meaning, a meaning which evaporates when the same reality is thought philosophically, i.e., objectively. Again, the basic principle in Hegel's approach is that purely objective intelligence be supreme—that personal freedom, personal uniqueness and irreducibility be excluded at the truly philosophical level. The objective thinker must keep himself at a level where good and evil, joy and sadness, war and peace, all the fruits of the use or abuse of freedom, be either put aside as philosophically unimportant or explained as the necessary unfolding of an objective Absolute which is above all attributes that are not strictly and exclusively the objects of speculative understanding. The purely objective thinker cannot adopt any other attitude so long as he intends to approach reality without the free response of faith to the mystery of the divine Presence, creator of freedom, giver of grace, invoker of free created response.

Gabriel Marcel, insisting in his philosophical approach to God on the primacy of the religious response to the presence of the Absolute Thou, has been faithful to the deepest presuppositions of the medieval Christian scholastics, much more so than those neo-scholastics who would read the text of the *Summa Theologiae* in the spirit of a purely objective philosophy, all the while failing to discern the profound transformation undergone by the Aristotelian formulae in the mind of the man of religious faith who is constantly overcoming the deficiencies of the very formulae he employs by reading into them an approach of faith, and thus renouncing implicitly their exclusively objective pretensions.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, (Toronto, 1950), pp. 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Theologiae*, Prima Pars, QQ. 103, 104, 105 (Biblioteca de Autores Christianos, Matriti, 1951), pp. 736-760.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* loc. cit. and Q. 13. pp. 90-109.

<sup>4</sup> "I am sure that the reputation enjoyed by some modern schools of thought, and the human reverence commanded by or corresponding to this reputation, has been shown to have a destructive effect on spiritual development. But I believe that there is also a danger in thinking that philosophico-theological ideas such as we find in St. Thomas Aquinas, for instance (not doctrine, for that is another story), are suitable for everybody in our day, just as they stand. I am inclined to say that they are suited to some minds but not to all; and that the profoundly true intuitions expressed in the Thomist formulae could gain greatly in force and intelligibility if they could be presented in fresh terms; in words that were newer, simpler, more moving, and more closely in tune with our own experience and (if you will forgive the word) our own ordeal. But this presupposes a refashioning which would only be possible after an immense preliminary work of criticism and reconstruction."

Gabriel Marcel, *Etre et Avoir* (Paris: Fernand Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1935), pp. 293-294. English translation, *Being and Having* (Dacre Press, Westminster, 1949, Harper Torchbook Edition, 1965), pp. 197-198.

<sup>5</sup> *L'homme problematique* (Paris: Aubier, 1955), pp. 62-64. Engl. translation, *Problematic Man*, transl. Brian Thompson (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), pp. 54-55.

<sup>6</sup> There is no contradiction between such an order, created and watched over by loving omnipotence, and the possibility of a valid human science. The latter, by concentrating upon what is common to many things, can discover a certain regularity and predictability in phenomena, can systematize this observed order in mental constructions which make possible the control and direction of the powers of material nature towards the attainment of particular human objectives. The possibility of such scientific structuring, however, is not at all the same thing as the pretentious claim to have 'solved' the mystery of the divine direction of the world. The true scientist is well aware of the depth of mystery that lies immeasurably beyond any humanly constructed theory.

Cf. *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. I, pp. 147-149, and pp. 263-265.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel Marcel, *Présence et Immortalité* (Paris: Flammarion, 1959), pp. 24-26.

In this connection Marcel frequently calls attention to the relation between his philosophical writings and his dramatic work. In the former, he says, he has always tried to guard against the denaturing of the existential real through the substitution of conceptual models for the actual existent; he has pointed out the basic injury done to the THOU when the attempt is made to reduce it to a conceptual formula. But it is in his dramatic creation that he has experienced the truth of this respect for the irreducible presence of the THOU.

*Loc. cit* and *Le Secret est dans les Iles* (Paris, Plon, 1967), pp. 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> "Remarques sur l'Irreligion Contemporaine." In *L'Etre et l'Avoir*, Part II. pp. 270-278. *Being and Having* (Harper Torchbook ed.), pp. 183-191.

<sup>9</sup> *Man Against Mass Society*, (Regnery Gateway Edition, 1962), p. 98.

<sup>10</sup> *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. II. (Chicago: Regnery, 1951—Gateway edition, 1960), p. 199.



<sup>11</sup> For example, in St. Bonaventure's insistence on the primacy of faith in Christian philosophy, in the emphasis on individuality and freedom in the metaphysics of Duns Scotus, and in the teaching of William of Occam on the limits of human conceptual knowledge.

<sup>12</sup> *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. I, pp. 262-263; 265-266.

<sup>13</sup> *Du Refus a L'Invocation* (Gallimard, 1940. English translation. *Creative Fidelity*, N.Y. 1964), pp. 112-119.

<sup>14</sup> *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. II, p. 210.

<sup>15</sup> See *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. I, pp. 163-164.

<sup>16</sup> *Being and Having*, p. 114.

<sup>17</sup> See *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. I, Chap. 3, p. 59 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Problematic Man*, p. 60.—See also *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. II, chap. 7, esp. pp. 124-127.

<sup>19</sup> *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. II, p. 126.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 203-204.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 204.

<sup>23</sup> On Plato's theology, cf. A. H. Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy* (Westminister, Md: Newman Press, 1949), pp. 46-49.

On Aristotle's theology cf. *ibid.*, pp. 87-91.

On the teaching of Plotinus concerning the relation of the world to the One, and concerning the hapless state of the vast body of mankind, the non-philosophers, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 183-186; 193-195.

For an *ex professo* study of the whole question of Christian faith and philosophy, cf. Claude Tresmontant. *Les origines de la philosophie chrétienne* (Paris: Librairie Artheme Foyard, 1962). English translation by M. Pontifex, *The Origins of Christian Philosophy* (N.Y.: Hawthorn Books, 1963).

<sup>24</sup> "Deus, cum sit summe bonus, nullo modo sineret aliquid mali esse in operibus suis, nisi esset adeo omnipotens et bonus, ut bene faceret etiam de malo." *Summa Theologie*, I, Q. 2, a. 3, ad Ium.

## ELEMENTS BASIC TO A CHRISTIAN PASTORAL VISION

FR. CARL M. PASQUALE, O.F.M., M.A.

The aim of this paper is to raise and suggest an answer to the following question: is it possible in our day of pluralism, in a day characterized by growing disenchantment with traditional beliefs, in a day increasing in awareness of human necessities on the individual and social levels, is it possible in our day to offer a synthetic, focally centered description of reality which is authentically Christian? In the midst of overwhelming disorder, is it possible to suggest a unifying, ordering vision?

That man by nature craves an overall view is confirmed by the fact that such view have been proffered and proclaimed. Witness the visions which find a root in Marx, Freud and Dewey. That a final, complete view of reality is desirable is the hope we share. That such a view is at all available is the question we raise.

By way of further introductory remarks, I would like to define the meaning of the terms vision, pastoral and Christian.

A vision is by nature interpersonal. It is someone's acquired way of looking at something offered to one who does not yet see in that fashion. Thus the view from a mountaintop may be breathlessly described to one who has not yet climbed the mountain. A theory is presented as a way of assembling a number of facts so that one who is aware of the same facts will see the same order among them. A vision, therefore, that is a world-view, is an acquired view.

An inner moment of any vision is its orientation towards action. A theory is by nature geared toward practice. What I am suggesting is the value in the pragmatic insight that a belief ought to make a difference in practice. The reason is that vision presents an ordering of what is and what can be. A theory sees the thrust that a number of facts take and the direction that the facts should take. Without pausing to defend this inner orien-

tation towards action for all theories I would like to suggest the connection between theory and practice for views that are presented as basic.

For my point, I would like to present three thinkers as three fundamental orientations in human thought. The thinkers are Marx, Freud and Dewey. And their fundamental orientation is in terms of the social, the psychological and the environmental. The world-view which each thinker offers is in terms of an equalized, ordered society in which each individual finds his place and value (Marx); a world in which each individual is liberated from the unconscious control and motivation in his behavior (Freud); a world in which men are enabled freely to interact with natural environment and build new and better civilizations and produce more perfect cultures (Dewey). Each thrust is a total vision and involves not just a seeing, but a doing. Hence the import of Marx's dictum that philosophy (that is any way of looking at reality fundamentally) must change the world (that is eventually result in action).

There are, then, many practical visions of reality. The word "pastoral" in this context emphasizes the concern to better the imperfect, too remedy inadequate situations. These visions have a saving, a salvific character. And the Christian Pastoral Vision enters the lists as one among many such pastoral visions.

What then are the characteristics of a specifically Christian Pastoral Vision? A Christian Pastoral Vision is personal, radical, synthetic practical and contemporary; *personal* because it is the lived vision of Christ and those who profess to be his followers; *radical* because it presents itself as the most fundamental way of looking at reality; *synthetic* because being most radical it helps locate all other partial visions; *practical* because this vision is not simply a passive set of beliefs but a view which offers the possibility of real change and activity; *contemporary* because it speaks to the human realities of our day, answering the fundamental questions of our day.

I would like to present the following discussion against the background of these five characteristics.

### 1. Personal

Two elements frequently at the center of present day dis-

cussion are *person* and *process*. These two aspects parallel the traditional dichotomies, such as invisible-visible in Plato and spirit-matter in St. Thomas. The aspect of person involves the self-presence of a subject open to the whole of reality and being. The person stands above his environment and is able to see himself in relation to the whole of reality. As such man is virtually infinite, open to totality. The aspect of process focuses on the historical, the temporal, therefore the limiting character of self-presence. Man's grasp of himself in relation to the whole is always rooted in historical-cultural frameworks.

If we view personal process as the self-relating thrust to the whole, we then have the roots of a total vision of what is and what can be. In a word, each person has a basic orientation to see things as a whole; this orientation may be achieved or not, expressed or not.

In Christ, therefore, the two dimensions of person and process are present. The dimension of process underscores the historical, cultural, growing characteristics of Christ's presence to himself. He is Jewish, viewing himself against the background of Old Testament history. His personal growth towards self-awareness—who he is, what he is to do—finds final expression in his self-donation on the cross, an historical event. Christ's vision, then, has a history; it is a growing realization expressed in his particular biography; and it possesses distinct elements which make his vision unique.

The essential elements of Christ's vision are his free acceptance of his human situation and his relationship to God his Father. The former—the free acceptance of his human situation—involves a free renunciation of his human efforts in favor of the divine. The latter—his relationship to God his Father—involves the free acceptance of the Fatherly initiative in his life. In other words, the process of growth in Christ is a journey, a passage from human self-will and control to total obedience to the Father's will. It is a *Kenosis*, an emptying out and a filling up.

It is often stated that belief and acceptance of Christian message is not a matter of doctrine, but of history; not something conceptual, but vital and experiential. These expressions are accurate but inadequate.



For Christ does offer a lived vision of life, a way of doing and not just seeing; he offers a pastoral vision. A realist, he points out things as they actually are. But at this point we ask: how does Christ differ from such men as Marx, Freud and Dewey? The basic difference in their world-views is not content, not differing structures. The basic difference is origin. Christ is unique in that he offers a "theory", a plan which is not his own. Christ is telling his disciples that he is privy to a unique way of doing things which have their free origin in his Father's will. Whereas Marx, Freud and Dewey have human plans of action, Christ offers a divine plan which he freely accepts and actualizes.

Is there not a basic difficulty in attempting correlations between Christianity and Marxism, Freudianism and Deweyism? Yes, there is a comparison by way of intention and content. But the unique difference must not be neglected or underplayed. For the personal vision of Christ is NOT HIS OWN, and that for Christianity is the fundamental difference.

## 2. Radical

Christ's vision is radical because of its origin, its root. It focuses on a seeing and a doing which originates in the Father's free initiative. This dimension of Christ's message is frequently neglected when that same message is presented as a revolutionary one, when Christ is presented as the "radical" who challenges institutional structure. For it is not "what" Christ did, but "why" he did it that makes the difference. I might add that perhaps this is the basic reason why Mary is so important to Christian revelation—she too is a "radical" though no sermons or miracles by her are found in the Gospels.

Furthermore other visions of life are not as radical for a second reason. This reason has to do not with origin but with content. When the visions of men like Marx, Freud and Dewey are spelled out there is a tendency to focus on one aspect of human experience and take that aspect for the whole of human experience. For example man's value in Marx is viewed in terms of the social dimension alone and the personal dimension is neglected or excluded. Dewey is concerned with man's domination of nature and man's interaction with his environment.

A fuller view of man must integrate all aspects of experience be they personal, social or technological, together with man's radical dependence on a source of being other than himself.

### 3. Synthetic

The Christian view is, furthermore, one which grasps other views as partial, as stages on life's journey. These stages are moments within the personal process; they are not to be absolutized. It is especially the radical character of the Christian view which allows for a true demytholization and desacralization.

What I am suggesting is that the positions of men such as the three thinkers we have been referring to are too often presented as absolute and antithetical when they are really relational and complementary. From the vantage point of the individual subject going through development the stages may be related as follows.

I find myself always in situation with others. Primarily with others and through others I discover myself, I come to self awareness. Because of limitation and finitude, I may eventually develop an inadequate and harmful self-concept. It is here that therapy enters as a means of uncovering the blocks to self-understanding and self-acceptance. I am liberated from myself in order to be myself. I am healed and made whole by this process.

If we may speak of psychological fixation concerning stages of personal development (fixation, for example, at the oral and anal phases) then by analogy we may speak of fixation at the psychological level itself. The result is an absolutizing of therapy as the only and final way of achieving healing.

It is at this point that the social dimension is added to personal growth. First I must discover mutuality in relation to others. After achieving an authentic self-concept I am enabled to give to and receive from others. Note the growing need of such techniques as sensitivity sessions in order to remove in community fashion blocks to mutuality.

The point that Marx appears to emphasize is that there is a way of my being-at-the-world which is only possible in a communal context. Certain efforts and projects, such as the space program, can never be the work of one man alone. Hence there

is a dimension to personal authenticity made possible only in a mutual relationship.

When a community thrust is possible, then a common effort in the domination of nature is realizable. And where Marx focuses on the community which is formed by the effort, Dewey appears to focus on the product which is the result of the common thrust. Thus when I am enabled to work with others in building a culture and civilization then growth extends itself to a common self-concept of our place in the cosmos.

This total, multi-dimension human growth of person and society can itself be fixated. And here is where a fundamental option enters. Either our common goal is totally realizable by human effort alone (thus Marx, Freud and Dewey) or it is not. And either there is assistance outside the purely human or there is not. I believe it is at this point that the metaphysical reflection finds its place.

As questioner—and I am able to question all—I uncover the common finitude we share, our essential limitation, together with our orientation toward absolute being. This realization of finitude underscores being as given, not controlled. The height of human growth and realism is the grasp of self as radically incapable of grasping the totality of that which is. Although oriented towards the Absolute, I (and therefore we) am not absolute.

The faith dimension enters as the completion of this growth pattern. Human helplessness is open to divine mercy and power. God alone can finally achieve what man on his own cannot. And therefore authentic human growth finds itself open to the possibility of the entrance of the Divine in its history. Belief in Christ means that the Divine has actually entered and has achieved full healing and salvation in Christ. Therefore all human aspirations are preserved and enobled in Christ. All partial healings are caught up and preserved in the healing which is the death and resurrection of Christ.

Again the final option is: ultimately who is the source of final healing, God or man? and if God, how does He achieve this healing?

#### 4. Practical

If we keep in mind that when we speak of growth through healing, we are speaking of a truly lived, experienced dimension of human existence, we can begin to reflect on the utterly practical nature of the Christian Vision.

It is precisely the dimension of "saving help" that is the central point of our reflection. If we look at our personal journey as a growth towards complete personal and common self-awareness in relation to the totality of that which is, we discover that a basic ingredient of experience is "alienation". Man is not at home with himself, with his surroundings including other people and things. He is not at home with the numinous which looms above him as a great unknown.

This experience of alienation may be translated as being ill at ease, that is dis-eased. It is a self-feeling which is grasped as unnatural, unwanted, and in many instances uncontrollable. That man is dis-eased in his universe is the point of departure which impels him to make a home that is comfortable for himself. That man, in biblical terms, experiences chaos both within and without himself impels man to seek for cosmos.

I become whole and healed to the extent that I am freed from self introversion. I am liberated from myself to be myself. Freud uncovered I believe false self-possession and its roots in unconscious psychic behavior.

There is a parallel liberation from a false absorption and possession in social relations. Thus one may be unduly controlled by another, falsely living off another's personality.

There is a third liberation from nature, and from the domination by nature. Here is where technology aids in establishing our control of our environment.

But only to the extent that we are truly possessed by God can we be finally protected from false absorption into self, society and nature. And it is here where radical healing takes place.

In a word, all meeting is healing. And an encounter with God in Christ is likewise a healing. But all other healings are historical and partial. They are valuable but never complete.

At this point I would like to digress momentarily to discuss



two recent theological developments in the light of these considerations.

The basic criticism of certain theologians of the secular is that revelation is presented as a past acquisition and in past cultural forms. As a result the relation to contemporary experience, the need to hear the Word today does not come into full, sharp relief. To substantiate this point we need only recall that the ideological predecessors of secular theology—Marx and Dewey—justifiably criticized Christianity for failing to heal social injustices and for blocking the true evaluation and exploration of nature. In a word, belief is not simply a saying, but a showing, not a dictum but a doing. Hence belief ought to have practical consequences in the human condition. It ought above all to be more human if it is to show itself as more divine.

Inevitably a divorce from the human condition makes belief suspect. And it is only in the dis-eased condition that belief manifests its practical power.

From another direction, certain tendencies of the theology of hope present a too futuristic conception of God. In an attempt to preserve the transcendental character of divine nature, God is too much a God of promise, one who will save. And the feeling is that there is no present experience of salvation and healing, only a promise of it. In this context atheism makes deadly sense. A God who is not presently concerned is a useless God. No need to deny such a God; better simply to ignore Him and to declare His death!

What then is the nature of the healing manifested in the Christian vision?

## 5. Contemporary

Karl Rahner demonstrates both the possibility and necessity of God speaking to us in our historical situation.<sup>1</sup> His conclusion, rightly drawn I think, is that if God is to speak to us he must do so within the context of space and time, his revelation must be historical because that is the nature of man.

Bu this again, from the rational point of view, only leaves open the possibility of a revelation, a healing presence, we have been speaking about. Does He speak? Does He actually heal?

We are no longer questioning the possibility of such a revelation, but searching out its actuality.

What we are looking for is not a theology of explanation, but a theology of proclamation. We need no longer arguments about Who God is or what He can do, but testimony as to what God is doing. We can no longer rest satisfied with a passive set of beliefs about Trinity and Incarnation, nor with a supplanting set of passive statements about demythologization, desacralization and rerominization. Our need is simply not for reform of structure, but renewal of personal belief. What we need are those who act as if they have seen the invisible.<sup>2</sup>

Imitating the model of belief provided by the first Christian community, we must look to the living presence of the Risen Savior. The power of the Risen Savior is manifested interiorly as he communicates a Spirit of peace, of healing, which the world cannot give. The power of the Savior is seen in His gift of a new heart, an interior law, an inner testimony of sonship. The power of the Savior is manifested visibly in healing of body and spirit. In a word, if we speak of the active presence of God in Christ, then we are testifying not merely to sign value of inner conversion and external rite of healing, but to real change and activity. The mechanics of the change may be reflected on theologically; its reality can be attested to personally.

## Conclusion

By way of conclusion, may I state briefly my answer to the opening question. Yes, there is a simple description of the Christian Pastoral Vision. It is a lived experience of the mind and spirit of Christ. It is a renewal today of his stance towards reality. It involves a radical letting go of self-direction into the hands of the Father, and this basically involves a metanoia, a change of mind, a return to service of God. The result of this "emptying" out is a view of one's life situation from the Father's point of view (imitating His love acceptance of all men and things) and an experience of the Father's specific will and power personally and communally. The "proof" of this presence is radical healing in terms of self, society and nature.

The final proclamation of the living reality of this vision in

our day, in a word, involves not a revelation of words, but one of deeds; not a description of what God intends to do, but what He is actually doing and accomplishing today!

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Karl Rahner, *Hearers of the Word* (New York, Herder and Herder, 1969), pp. 150-163.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Hebrews 11:27.

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## CONTEMPORARY ECUMENISM AND ST. FRANCIS

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Erasmus appreciated dialogue and encouraged it wherever he went. After Luther posted his theses and the discussion with Eck broke down, some people looked to Erasmus to get a unitive dialogue going again between Luther and the representatives of Rome. Erasmus tried, but discovered that emotions were too high. He suggested a postponement. Actually, that postponement lasted more than four centuries. The re-inauguration of dialogue between the Christians who broke off friendship with one another and went through an ice-age of war, polemics, and estrangement is referred to as the ecumenical movement.

The term *ecumenism* derives from the Greek *oikumene* meaning "the whole of the inhabited world" (Acts 17:6; Matthew 24:14) and in recent years has meant these efforts to reunite all Christians. In earlier Christian centuries efforts were made to reunite heretics and schismatics into one Christian family by persuasion, threats, or even force; however, it has been in the twentieth century that the spontaneous striving of most religious communities for worldwide unity has been expressed and worked at.

The origin of this ecumenical thrust came alive through Christian missionaries. The Church, they thought, is mission—world-mission. The alternative is to be introverted, to be partisan. And therefore in 1910 at Edinburgh, Scotland, Anglican and Protestant missionaries pointed out the harmfulness of Christian divisions on the missions. It was a scandal to the people who were being evangelized. It was hurtful to Christian witness.

The first result of the 1910 Edinburgh meeting was the formation of an international Missionary Council which aimed to avoid competition among Christian missionaries for native conversions in non-Christian countries. The notion was also expressed by some delegates that the proclamation of the Gospel is independent of denominational creeds.

A second result of these discussions between Anglicans and Protestants was the formation of a Life and Work conference in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1925. This conference aimed to apply Christian principles to international relations and to social, industrial, and economic life. A notion expressed by some of the delegates was that "service unites but doctrine divides."

A third result was the Faith and Order conference at Lausanne in 1925. Here an effort was made to discuss doctrinal matters with a view towards unity.

All of these movements coalesced into a structure called the World Council of Churches which was established with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1948. The whole effort, thus far, had come about and developed without any Roman Catholic participation.

The popes had refused invitations to Roman Catholics to attend these conferences. On January 6, 1928, Pius XI in *Mortalium Animos* discussed the problem of Christian unity. He declared that for Catholics doctrinal compromise is inadmissible. Neither can the Catholic Church be one of a federation of independent bodies holding differing doctrines. Therefore Catholics were forbidden to take part in these efforts to reunite the churches.

This stage of the ecumenical movement might be called the *ecclesial* or the effort at comparative ecclesiology. It still continues in our day but with a little less enthusiasm. It strives to bring about mergers among Christian churches. It is concerned with church structures—with such questions, for instance, as whether bishops are of the *esse* or merely of the *bene esse* of the church or the questions of ministry and creedal formulas. Efforts like COCU (Commission on Church Union) are typical of this enterprise. By some younger ecumenists this has been pejoratively alluded to as "ecclesial navel studying."

The interest of Roman Catholics in the new ecumenical movement developed slowly. One evidence of interest was an effort by Pius XI to assist Byzantine and Eastern Catholic churches in realizing their identity. The Pontifical Oriental Institute was set up in Rome along with the foundation of Ethiopian, Ruthenian, and Russian colleges. Some Latin Catholics took an interest in Eastern rites and in Eastern rite Catholics. The Latinization

movement among Eastern rite Catholics was opposed. The Monastery of Chevtogne in Belgium was founded to study Orthodox. Publications such as *Istina* and *Eastern Churches Quarterly* began. And in 1937 unofficial but approved Catholic observers attended the Faith and Order conference in Edinburgh.

Next, in 1949, the Holy Office issued an *Instruction on the Ecumenical Movement*. Though this document contained many warnings, it did give the movement recognition, said it was of serious interest to Catholics, encouraged Catholics to pray for its success, and permitted Catholics to take a part in it under certain conditions. Participants must be "suitable priests," they must have the approval of their bishop, and they must explain fully and clearly the teaching of the Catholic Church on each controverted issue. For larger meetings the permission of the Holy See must be obtained.

Catholic observers attended World Council of Churches meetings in Lund (1952), Oberlin, Ohio (1957), St. Andrews, Scotland (1960), New Delhi (1961) and Upsala (1968). During this period the WCC clearly expressed the idea that it was not a world church but a consultative body for the affiliated Christian churches.

Meanwhile new Roman Catholic ecumenical organizations and prayer movements sprang up and flourished. The *Una Sancta* movement in Germany conducted Lutheran-Catholic dialogue and a publication. The prayer movement began by Father Paul of Graymoor in 1908 grew and was taken in a further direction by Abbé Couturier of Lyons, France. The *Unitas* foundation and publications were inaugurated by Pius XII.

Finally, the John XXIII era and Vatican Council II (1958-63) with delegated observers from the Orthodox, the Anglicans, and the Protestants marked the definitive end of the polemic era. In 1960 the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, with Cardinal Bea as head, came into being. Subsequent documents came from the Council. The Decree on *Ecumenism* expressed the Catholic Church's stance on unity efforts with other Christian Churches. The documents on the *Church*, on *Religious Liberty*, and on the *Church in the Modern World* were all supplementary to the statement on *Ecumenism*.

At the present time the ecumenical aims of the World Council of Churches and those of the Roman Catholic Church have moved closer together on many basic points. With the WCC there is basic agreement with 1) division among Christians is contrary to God's will and an obstacle to achieving the mission of Christianity to the world, 2) unity must be visible as well as invisible, and 3) unity and mission to non-Christians are connected, and 4) the Church must be supra-national, supra-racial.

Roman Catholics ecumenists agree and emphasize that truths of faith are not to be glossed over in discussions, that the Eucharist is central to ecclesial unity, and that unity must be stable, continuous, and inclusive, though not rigidly structured. Finally, and here all are in perfect agreement, unity derives ultimately from Christ.

One area that causes some difficulties in Roman Catholic-Protestant dialogues is the Roman Catholic insistence that the Church has never, and will never cease to be one in faith, sacraments, and leadership under the successors of Peter. However, the Constitution on the *Church* emphasizes the Church as mystery as well as sign, admits that the Church needs renewal, and states that the Church is one in essentials but will not be completely one until all men are together in unity. If the time for this realization is placed at (eschaton-x) there are few attempts to assign a value to x. Moreover, it is admitted that the defects of the members of the Church obscure the presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore reformation and renewal are necessary if the Church is to be clearly seen by all.

In the ongoing dialogue between Catholics and other Christians two important principles are kept in mind: 1) all theological formulations must be understood in historical context, and 2) no theological formulations exhaust the fullness of truth.

The status of the baptized as members of Christ, a point developed by Cardinal Bea, is one of the keys of the decree on *Ecumenism*. All the baptized belong to Christ, even if not fully. Those who are "separated Christians" share a common patrimony with Roman Catholics in virtue of their faith in Christ, gifts of the Spirit, the Lord's Supper, and charity and good works.

The obstacles to ecclesial ecumenism continue to be Roman



Catholic fear of "indifferentism" and Anglican and Protestant fear of "domination" by Rome. Words like *infallibility* still cause ecclesial icing.

Besides strictly *ecclesial* ecumenism, other areas of great theological achievement have been in biblical and liturgical studies. Referred to by some as "catholic" (small *c*) ecumenism, common translations of the Bible and cooperative commentaries and studies have brought Catholic biblical scholars into close collaboration with other biblical scholars. Likewise, a strong mutual interest in liturgy between Roman Catholics and other Christians has narrowed the gap in eucharistic outlook and practice. A basic question here is intercommunion. Some theologians on both sides favor intercommunion; pastoral authorities, in general, oppose it.

Essentially, ecumenism is a spiritual movement. It is a call to holiness, zeal, union with Christ. "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name," states the decree on *Ecumenism*, "without a change of heart." And the decree goes on: "This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and can rightly be called spiritual ecumenism." The vitality for ecumenical advance comes from the prayer movement advocated by Father Paul of Graymoor and Abbé Couturier of Lyons—both of which were based on Christ's priestly prayer that "all may be one. . . ."

In the past few years the direction of the ecumenical movement seems to be away from the strictly ecclesial, the biblical, the liturgical and in the direction of what is often called *social* ecumenism. It is based on a view that the ecumenical effort must consider the urgent problems of our time—the wounds, the sufferings of mankind. Moved by a desire to be relevant and by an attraction towards the prophetic, clergymen, nuns, and religious people have concerned themselves with breaking down the barriers which separate young from old, rich from poor, and black from white. Ecumenists have gravitated towards an involvement with the poor, the victims of war, the deprived and persecuted.

Social ecumenism would make the Gospel relevant for the cause of justice and peace. This phenomenon is not a mere revival

of the social Gospel of several decades ago. It has been purged by thinkers like Barth of such natural optimism. It is, as the WCC states, based on the view that responsible society is "one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order and where those who hold positions of authority and economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and to the people whose welfare is affected by it."

Man is seen as the steward of creation. In the words of the 1970 Week of Prayer, "We are fellow workers for God." As Christians—indeed, even as men—we are against racial segregation, we are for religious liberty, we are for the religious solidarity of all mankind. Many in our time, particularly the young, are pursuing these goals as individuals, as groups, without any connection with Church organizations. Others try to work through the churches.

In pursuit of this aim, the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church have agreed to launch on an international scale a major initiative to promote world justice, development, and peace. The three principal thrusts of SODEPAX (Committee on Society, Development, and Peace) are 1) towards elaborating theology and social teaching adequate to the vast dimensions of today's issues, 2) towards world cooperation for economic and social development, and 3) towards international political institutions for organizing peace. Pope Paul's famous visit to the United Nations could be taken as a symbolic gesture of support for that organizations' efforts for poverty and peace as his visit to Geneva can be taken as support of the overall ecumenical efforts of the World Council of Churches.

Having outlined the elements of ecumenical enterprise going on today, we now come to the question of how St. Francis of Assisi and his spirit fit into this effort. Is a follower of St. Francis suitable and capable of participating wholeheartedly in the ecumenical movement?

I offer an affirmative answer to these questions. First, it seems to me that St. Francis in his intuitive words and actions and in his un-introverted manner of being a person is as up-to-date as the needs of the ecumenical age demand. It is not so easy to say that many Franciscans—seeing only a legalized, out-of-focus

Francis—are living in an awareness of the urgent ecumenical needs of today.

First, the *mysticism* of St. Francis saw God as immanent in all things and in man's destiny. Witness the canticles. And his actions in the *Fioretti*. Christ in his humanity is the perfect sacrament of God; all other men share in this sacrament as mirrors of God. This Christian teleology envisioned the universe as created only to be Christian, as in God's hands. It was a vision of joy, peace, optimism. It valued the worth of others, of Muslims, beggars, thieves. It valued the opinions of others. Verbal and personal interaction took place between Francis and those he encountered.

The union with God was intuitive rather than conceptual. It was the loving experience of God, and through God, the loving experience of man. It was an open and not an introverted view of others. It was the kind of outlook which breaks barriers and brings an end to polemics.

Second, the *theology* of St. Francis is Christocentric. . . . He saw in the literal imitation of the Christ of the Gospel man's rule of life. The Gospel is the way of life. Put in Bonaventure's words, it means that to attain wisdom a man must be led by Christ. Or in Scotus', it testifies to Christ's absolute primacy, and sees man, made in Christ's image, as co-lover, co-worshipper, co-worker of Christ. It is on this Gospel level—the Christ level—that Francis speaks to Protestants often turned off by hearing so many un-Gospel things from Catholics. I see Francis as a Gospel man in the sense of evangelical preachers who present to men what they understand from the words of the Scriptures. I see Francis as a Gospel man in the sense of enthusiastically supporting the ecumenical biblical movement of today.

Third, the *ecclesiology* of Francis is in a fraternity in which Christ is met in his members. In recent years the Franciscan communities have been trying to restore at-home ecumenism by giving the members who are Brothers an equality of membership with priests. Ecumenism, like everything else, should begin at home, and then fraternity will move more readily into the relationship with the people round about the friaries.

The words Francis heard from the crucifix at San Damiano's

were these: "Francis, go repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruin." This Francis took literally and went out and got the money to repair it. The symbolism, however, is that his work is in the Church of Christ—repairing it in a Catholic context. *Ecclesia semper reformanda*. The Church as the fraternity of all men needs continuous reformation. Francis acts instantly to fulfill this need whether it be the repair of structures that have fallen into disuse and can be no longer repaired or by adopting his own style by using places at hand like the portiuncula and the streets of Assisi and Umbria. Also, Francis' way was to go out to those who had the money and power and to get it and share it with the poor.

Fourth, the asceticism of Francis is a man's acknowledgement of his little state (*minoritas*) before God. It is a kenosis or emptying. "When I see how great God is and how little I am," he said one day to Fra Pacificus. "I begin to say, 'I am a worm. . .'" This kenotic outlook, stressed by St. Paul, gives a Christian strength to be among the poor and deprived and not to be disenchanted by the lack of gratitude so often experienced among those whom we love and work for. More stress should be placed on the kenotic outlook so long as it does not become masochistic or uptight.

Fifth, the social and contemporary thrust of Francis also rested on an incarnational view of things. Since God became man, creation now has value. Nature is ordered towards supernature. All things are to be revered. God has assumed matter and all is blessed by this union. And there is urgent need for involvement in the contemporary milieu because Jesus is there. Be in the world; sanctify it.

Are there examples of Franciscans today pursuing these goals of St. Francis? I can give only a few little *for instances*.

Last winter I spent a little time with the Anglican Franciscans in London. Two brothers and two priests in one area spent all their time working for the welfare of slumdwelling people. When I asked Brother Bernard about it, he said: "Franciscanism is an ecumenism of service in the context of the poor and needy."

In March I visited the Capuchin worker priests on Kommenstrasse Street in Amsterdam, Holland. Four of them dwell in an



apartment with three of them working in factories and the fourth caring for the house and for the poor in the neighborhood. I asked why they were doing this: "To translate the ideals of St. Francis into 1969. But the question is, How can we make a good translation?"

This is the key question: How can we make a good translation? Every way must be tried, especially the most original and unheard of ways. That is probably how Francis would do it.

The Amsterdam Capuchins were a fraternity praying together in the morning and evening, sharing community with one another a) in their apartment home, b) with fellow Capuchins in a nearby monastery, and c) with their fellow factory workers. The accent was on fraternity. Fraternity means 1) freedom to love one another (celibacy), 2) sharing with one another (poverty), and 3) ministering to one another (obedience). To live with and in solidarity with the poor they saw as the uniquely Franciscan ecumenism.

Laudable and admirable as these examples are, it seems that an even freer and more joyful style of life is still possible today for those Franciscans who would make the literal translation of Francis into 1969. Can we enjoy the perfect freedom of the Gospel? After the death of Francis a negative answer seemed often to be given to this question. St. Francis, it seems to me, expected everyone to enjoy the perfect freedom of the Gospel. Indeed, one cannot be a Franciscan unless one enjoys this freedom whereby Francis changed a dying medieval world into a time of Christian joy.

It is by taking the freedom of the Gospel that one attains to Franciscan personhood. Then as a Franciscan person, one feels at home with others; others feel at home with you. What is the test of a Franciscan house? If the poor and the blacks and the sick and the middle class too feel at home therein.

I recall the day several years ago, when Martin Luther King, Jr. was still alive and he was given a Franciscan award. It was the first honor he had received from a Catholic and it was appropriate that he get it from a Franciscan. He recalled Francis and peace, Francis and the poor. The question was spoken quietly by some Franciscans present: If Francis were alive at this time in America,

how would he be speaking to the Vietnamese war? how would he be speaking to the Black revolution? All knew he would be in there. But how? Can we as Franciscans be silent to the most urgent demands of our time? Can we leave the work to the Ber-rigans and to the Hippies and to others?

The early Franciscans were wandering evangelists. They went out and met people on a person to person basis as Francis went out and met the Sultan. They spoke simply, served the sick and poor, worked, accepted hospitality and—if necessary—begged. Poverty, preaching and penance were the discoveries of the three texts when Francis opened the Gospel.

The last of these—penance—describes the Third Order, which was an order of penance. This is the penance of renewal which the decree of *Ecumenism* is pointing out when it says that "there is no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart."

Finally, we are back to the oikumene, the whole inhabited world. We see Francis sending out a few followers in every direction into this world. They go as a *minoritas* a small number into a vast world. They accept their minority status as the Blacks and the Puerto Ricans and others in America have so long accepted theirs. It is not so bad to be a minority if one is a person as Francis was.

The minority status is also accepted in the kenotic sense; like Christ they have emptied themselves of pride and go out just *to be* and to be small rather than directly *to serve*. If one *is*, then chances of mutual service happen. A minority waits. It does not take the stance of imperial servants, demanding to serve. Nor to dominate. But to be present . . . and if asked, or if needed, to give service and to be enriched by it.

And thus it is, it seems to me, as numbers get smaller and houses get emptier the *minores* will walk into the inhabited world or oikumene and those who stay behind in the empty houses will make them open houses to be shared by all who want to come and learn the secret of Francis, which is really an open secret.

# STRUCTURE IN RELIGION AND THE NEEDS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

RICHARD BERGERON, O.F.M.

Speaking of the problem of the relationship between religion and the surrounding world has almost become a banality. It is a problem as old as christianity itself and theologians have been aware of it in every age. In general, the object of the theological reflection was the relationship between civil and religious powers: the sword and the cross. Today, however, the problem is posed in very different terms. Religion itself is put in question by modern man. This paper will attempt to explain the origin of the present problems and then show how and under what conditions religion can still plan a role in the contemporary world.

## I From Cosmocentrism to Anthropocentrism

### 1. Man in God's World (the cosmos)

God's world is that world which has come from the hands of the Creator and, after a long evolution, has arrived at its present state of development. God's world is the universe with all of its physical laws; it is that nature in which man lives. It is no secret that man has never been satisfied with simply leaving nature in its primary state; he has progressively moved through a hunting civilization to one of collecting or gathering his food to one of agriculture and animal husbandry. Man has always been an inventor. He has invented tools and has brought many projects to fulfillment. But the framework of his realizations has never exceeded that of nature itself. Until very recently man lived in close proximity to nature and it remained the immediate context of his existence. Nature had the prestige of the numinous for him and was seen as a sovereign, governing reality which provoked both admiration and fear in man. "The eternal silence of the infinite spaces fills me with fear," wrote Pascal. Man lived a role subordinate to nature. Nature was a domain that remained outside of

the control and reach of man who was at the same time, beneficiary and victim of laws he could not escape.<sup>1</sup>

Nature was considered to be a creature whose laws required respect. There was no getting out from under those laws; there was no turning them against nature herself to escape from her hold and to reduce her to the service of man. Nature was God's sacrament, the servant of his desires, the expression of his relationship with man where his anger and his benevolence could be seen. Cosmic phenomena, earthquakes, drought, rains, sickness, were so many realities that escaped the prevision and control of men and represented many experiences of divine presence and concern. Nature was, in a very real sense, a continuing theóphany of immense proportions.

Religion corresponded to man's need to establish himself in an harmonious relationship with that nature seen as the expression of a rewarding and punishing divine providence. Faced with the sacredness of nature, man was obliged to adopt an attitude of silent submission, of calm acceptance or of ardent supplication to win divine favor for himself. Religion is born of man's need to escape from the situation in which he finds himself in the universe, from the insecurity of his existence and the inevitability of death. Anthropologically, religion appears "as man's answer to the demands of his human condition which impel him to seek security and stability through identification with a reality greater, worthier and more lasting than his own. Religion represents the efforts of man to adapt himself to his human condition not only to make it bearable, but also to make certain that his life has a meaning."<sup>2</sup> Religion appeared as a system of rites, of gestures and of things destined to constantly relocate man within the world context and thus to guarantee him a certain security and to assure him of a certain protection against the insecurities of the world whose structures seemed immutable to him. Thus, religious feast days and celebrations are always closely connected to the rhythmic cycle of nature.

We can say that Christianity, considered as a religion, aims at satisfying man's need to escape from the condition he is born into, from the oppression of time and of destiny, thanks to the proclamation of the revelation of God in Christ. Religion was



lived by the great majority of christians much more as a means of re-establishing man in harmony with the universe, whose sovereignty was identified with the Lordship of God, than as the expression of a covenant expressing itself in a worship of spirit and truth.

## 2. The World of Man

That situation, still prevalent not so very long ago, has changed today to an unbelievable degree. We are at the end of an era and at the dawning of a new world. Our christian conscience has great difficulty in truly realizing the magnitude of the change and its profound effects upon the conscience of mankind. We are at a decisive turning point in history. A turning point "is a place where a break occurs between the past and the future, more precisely, between an actual situation inherited from the past and a whole set of new possibilities which appear abruptly thanks to important discoveries, where new horizons open up and humanity is propelled towards a few future."<sup>3</sup>

This turning-point of history has come about through science and technology. It is no longer kings, governors, conquerors or philosophers who leave their mark on the world but scientists. Science has given birth to a technology which allows man to become increasingly the master of nature. Sickness, of course, still exists but man is able to diagnose it, prevent it and fight it to the extent that he has doubled his life-expectancy. We have no control over the thermometer but we can protect ourselves from heat and cold. Man lives at a distance from nature; he transforms it, dominates it and places it at his service. "Nature becomes the matter and the instrument of the creative action of man."<sup>4</sup> Consequently, it suddenly loses its numinous and sacred character; it is no longer God's servant. Man lives in a world fashioned by his own hands. Nature becomes the material that man needs to experience his own creative liberty, to make a world which is his, a world according to his own good pleasure. Man builds for himself a world in his own image. Nature is the quarry from which the world of man emerges. And this world of man is made for man; it is centered on man; it speaks of man; it reveals man and

can easily hide God. Man has passed over from cosmocentrism to anthropocentrism in a decisive manner.

Man builds his world without the God-hypothesis. In cosmocentrism, God was master in every domain; man is or aspires to be master of every domain. One has the impression that ever accomplishment and conquest of man pushes God further and further back into the world of shadows. The idea of God loses its consistency and slips away from man's understanding. God does not seem to have anything to do with this world any more; he no longer enters into the categories of man's mind. Every progress of man seems to indicate a set-back for God. After his eviction from his cosmic residence, God took refuge, so to speak, in the obscure realm of the psychic and the unconscious. Psychoanalysis is in the process of putting him out of this last refuge.<sup>5</sup> Each discovery of man brings about, without any doubt, "a diminishing in the search for a *religious* protection from the insecurities of this world, a world which used to be thought of as being immutable in its structure."<sup>6</sup> For this reason that religion which, on the conscious level of the christian masses, served to re-situate man in harmony with the universe, no longer corresponds to anything; it seems useless and without a function. The world of man is radically secular.

### 3. Man in His World

The turning-point of history that we are now living is so decisive and radical that it affects man to the depth of his being. Man is an incarnate consciousness and in a situational state: there is a mutual over-lapping between man and the world, between the manner that man experiences his existence and the manner that the world appears to him as a structured ensemble of situations and tasks. His relationship of self to himself (to his past and his personal future); his relationship to nature and to other men, and finally his relationship to the mystery of God—all these things are completely transformed. A new horizon of rational comprehension, a new sensitivity towards values goes along with this new manner of being in the world. A new man is born from a new world.<sup>7</sup>

This man has built a world which is a prolongation of himself.

He transforms nature into a dimension of the human body and spirit. People recognize themselves in their car, in their kitchen equipment and in their living-room furniture. Technology prolongs our senses into the social world. Marshall McLuhan has shown that the appearance of a new technology which prolongs one or several of our senses into the social world, provokes, by the very fact, new relationships between the senses in a culture.<sup>8</sup> And it is this change of sensorial relationships, resulting from diverse exteriorizations of our senses, which is at the basis of cultural changes. The organization of society, economic and political imperatives, the communication media, all bring about a levelling-down among men as far as thought, needs sentiments and aspirations are concerned. Individual thought, the victim of the indoctrination of opinion-makers, is drowned in the mass media; advertisement and the general climate of society condition man and create real or fictitious needs which are common to all and stir up common longings. The men of western civilization think in the same way, have the same psychological reactions, experience the same needs and the same aspirations. H. Marcuse is right when he speaks of a uni-dimensional man.

This man is characterized by an ensemble of ideas and conceptions of man and the universe but still more by a particular sensitivity towards certain fundamental values. A value is something that the conscience sees as a response to certain existential possibilities, and therefore as something worthwhile being pursued. This is why every value is a promise, that is, a hope and a duty at the same time.

Contemporary man pursues new values with enthusiasm but with less and less utopia. Contemporary man has lost his naïveté, as Jaspers said. He experiences lucidity more and more. This experience consists, very simply, in the awakening of a conscience which was drowsy from habit and diversion. Through the experience of lucidity, man becomes conscious of the deep irrationality of the world around him. "The experience of lucidity is a torture for the intelligence and the misery of the intelligence gives birth to sentiments: anger, disgust, nausea, but above all revolt. In every case, it is a question of a reaction of hate."<sup>9</sup> The lucid man sees the world in its savagery and its inhumanity; he observes that

the world of man is very often a world against man, that basic values are contradicted by the structures of society, that the deepest aspirations of men are frustrated. He observes that the world of man is a gigantic machine that man put in motion but over which he lost control: the machine keeps advancing, crushing everything in its way. Man no longer succeeds in situating himself in his world; he feels like a foreigner, unable to integrate all the elements of his world. He believes in truth but he no longer knows where he is going; he believes in freedom and justice but he feels oppressed; he longs for human brotherhood but he sees that the system divides men; he possesses material goods but he feels possessed by them. In other words, man is unable to live in harmony with the world he created.

## II Religion on Trial

The question which arises, therefore, is the following: can religion still mean something for man today? Does it still have a role to play? Can it help man to situate himself in his world? Can it help to establish a harmony between man and his world?

### 1. Religion Forgotten

We are forced to admit that, *de facto*, religion has socially less and less place in the world of man. The process of secularization appears more and more as left-overs from a dated civilization. The cathedrals of Montreal and New York, overshadowed by the imposing sky-scrapers which surround them, are striking symbols of a religion which is crushed by the structures of the contemporary world. Man of today has not integrated religion into the structures of his world and religion has not succeeded in keeping man within its confines. From the time of the Renaissance, the various spheres of human activity such as art, philosophy, literature and politics, have gradually slipped away from the influence of the christian religion and have assumed their own autonomy. The world of man and the world of religion have become two hermetic and parallel realities. It would seem that religion has lost the revolution.

Many men think that the disappearance of religion is an excel-



lent thing. It is a question of principle for them. Since Nietzsche's great declaration on the death of God, since the appearance of Marxism and psychoanalysis, religion is considered either as an opium which puts man to sleep or as the worst alienation possible; it resembles a Moloch which devours man. For these men, religion is a murderer from the beginning. It is responsible for many murders: it stifled consciences by its laws; it assassinated intelligences by its dogmatism; it crushed freedoms by its authoritarianism. Besides these psychological murders, religion has committed many physical murders starting with the crusades, passing through the inquisition and the wars of religion, and ending with its collusion with the established order, which, in many countries, keeps man in slavery. Religion must disappear if man is to live fully.

Religion, moreover, always according to the men we are speaking of here, belongs to a past stage of humanity's evolution; it corresponds to a civilization in which man had not yet dissociated himself from the *in se* (essence) of things, a civilization in which he had not yet taken a distance in his relationship to the world of nature and in which he had not yet arrived at independence as far as his relation to cosmic forces were concerned. Vahanian develops this idea in his article on the end of the religious era.<sup>10</sup> Bonhoeffer had written before him: "The time when we could speak to men about everything with theological and pious words is past, just as the time of spirituality and conscience, that is, the time of religion in general, is past. We are advancing towards a totally unreligious age . . . All of revelation and our christian theology, nineteen hundred years old, rely on the religious *a priori* of men. 'Christianity' has always been a form of religion (perhaps the true one). If we discover some day that this *a priori* does not exist, but was rather a form of human experience dependent on history and subject to perish, if therefore men become radically unreligious—what then does this situation signify for Christianity? Once that which has been the foundation of our christianity until now is taken away, our religion can have effect only on a few remaining cavaliers or a handful of intellectually disloyal men."<sup>11</sup>

For Bonhoeffer and the radical theologians, religion seems a dated form of christianity. The christian religion is a clothing of

christianity and this clothing has changed in aspect from one age to another. Religion as a cultic and social organization is not a necessary incarnational form of christianity. Christianity is called to rid itself of its religions form. For what does a liturgy, a worship, a preaching mean for an unreligious man? It is thus necessary to install an *ecclesia* which belongs fully to the world. Christianity must become a-religious, "secular." It must speak of God in a secular manner and lose its vertical dimension to live in a purely horizontal direction. To be christian is to live "for the other" in the world. Christ must become the Lord of the world, the Lord of secular men. Bultmann did not go far enough with his existential interpretation; hence forth we must interpret the Jesus-event in an unreligious or secular way. Karl Barth can lay claim to the origin of this idea of a christianity without religion. In his voluminous Dogmatics he sets out to show that the revelation of God is both the assumption and the abolition of religion.

More radical thinkers, wishing to bridge the gap between christianity and contemporary culture, believe that it is insufficient to speak of an religionless or secular christianity; according to them, we must speak of an atheistic christianity. In their desire to take contemporary culture seriously, these radical theologians see themselves forced to live the death of God since culture is deeply atheistic. Atheism, in fact, is accepted as a cultural phenomenon. The death of God is a saving event. It is an indication of man's accession to autonomy and independence as well as the death of religion. God and transcendence have ceded the depth of their reality to man and the world.

## 2. The Future of Religion

This criticism of religion certainly contains many elements of truth but it seems much too radical. It is not at all evident that the christian religion is an accidental covering-over of christianity. It is true that the prophets of the Old Testament condemned institutionalized religion; Christ himself contested the role of the Temple which was the center and the symbol of the Jewish religion; the New Testament does not use the word "religion" to describe christianity. The first christians were accused of atheism. This contesting of religion that we find in Scripture aims at the

religious system considered as a cultic, ethical and ritualistic system which pretends to save man by claiming to be the unique mediating agent between God and man. The fact remains, however, that religion seems to be an essential though secondary mode of expression of christianity. The basic reality of christianity is the initiative of God who saves us in Jesus Christ. This salvation, in its totality a gift of God, is received in faith. Faith in its turn is seen both as the gift of God and the response of man to the realities of salvation. This faith seeks to express itself in a communal and social manner, as well as in a way that is prayerful and cultic. As an individual and collective cultic expression, the christian religion seems to be an essential modality of faith and a constitutive element of christianity. Moreover, this cultic and collective expression has an inner tendency to become organized and institutionalized. It must be affirmed, therefore, that christianity is, though secondarily, a religious system, a religion understood in the sense of a system serving as a necessary mediation between men and the world of God.

I would add that religion in the anthropological sense spoken of earlier is also a dimension of christianity. For there is no religion in the sense of a system regulating the relationship between the natural and the supernatural, which does not imply a dimension of religion in the sense of a system aiming to regulate the relationship between man and the world. There is no christianity without the Church and there is no Church without religion.

This is why we must express our disagreement with those who opt for a religionless christianity, whether it be secular or atheistic, for they rob christianity of one of its essential dimensions. The God of christians is the God of the world and of history. In a cosmocentric vision of the world, religion was organized in the function of the God of the cosmos. The religious dimension of the Church was strongly marked by a certain cosmogony and by the rhythm of nature; it helped man to situate himself in relationship to the universe by situating him in relationship to God. The world of man is the world of history. Religion must be organized in the function of the God of history; the christian religion of the future must be more anthropological than cosmological. Christianity, as religion, must help man to situate himself in his own world. The

religious ethos of the Church, of christianity, must cease being cosmological and become anthropological.

The Church as a community of believers and as a religion is not something superfluous in the contemporary world. She has an important mission to accomplish on the condition that she fulfill adequately her three-fold function, that is, her kerygmatic, diaconal and religious functions.

By her kerygmatic function, the Church is called to proclaim the message of hope. Secular man in his lucidity grasps the absurdity of the world he has constructed. Man is a slave to those forces over which he was supposed to rule; he is tempted to abandon his freedom to the forces which oppress him and to allow himself to be dominated by an absurd destiny. The problem which faces him then is one of meaning because there is no longer any hope: it is a question of the meaning of life, of love, of work, etc. By her kerygmatic function, the Church aims at removing fatalism from the world of man by proclaiming on one hand that Christ has liberated us from the powers and the forces which oppress man and enclose him in an absurd circle and, on the other hand, that Christ has won for us a hope which restores meaning to man and to the world. In other words, the role of the Church is to offer a teaching which is not so much imperative as indicative: to declare that man is just as free from the destiny imposed on him by the gods of politics or economics or society as he is free from the destiny imposed on him by the gods of nature. The Church consequently tells man that he must act freely according to the pattern of Jesus who was so extraordinarily free for his neighbor.

The Church has a diaconal function as well. *Diakonia* is the humble service of tables. The Church is called to be the waiter, so to speak, of the world and of man. She must work towards curing, dressing wounds, giving health, that is, restoring all the parts of the world to their integrity. The evils to be cured are injustice, poverty, ignorance, inequality, discrimination, the powerlessness of the oppressed, etc. In the past, she fulfilled her diaconal function by creating institutions and by doing charitable works. Without rejecting this manner of serving, the Church today, to fulfill her diaconal role, must dissociate herself from those social structures which are the source of evil and commit herself with



resolution to the struggle against any system which alienates and oppresses man. She must place herself alongside the historical forces of liberation. The struggle against oppressive and alienating systems is never the affair of a mass movement but rather that of a handful of men. The Church is called to be this small remnant which has the mission to carry everywhere the sword which the Lord has given her.

By her diaconal role, the Church will thus be able to work toward the bringing together of all men just as Jesus came to unite the divided children of God. The aspirations of men for peace, unity and communion are frustrated. Discrimination, segregation, narrow and chauvinistic nationalisms reign everywhere. The structures of the world divide and isolate men instead of uniting them. The Church has an important role to play in bringing men together and she must do her best to be an agent of peace everywhere. As a community of hope, she must make concrete and visible the communal ideal that men attempt to realize in vain.

By her religious function, the Church is called to help man situate himself in the world with harmony by helping him overcome his fears, his apprehensions and his anguish. Man can attain perfect interior security only by passing from an inauthentic life based on the goods of this world to an authentic life based on faith in God. By her religious function, the Church must fight against all those substitutes (*ersatz*) which exploit man's religious sense and offer to this religious sense that nourishment which man needs to assure his deep maturity.

The Church then, by the three-fold function that she is destined to realize in the world of man, exercises society and culture—as Harvey Cox has shown. She exorcises society and culture by contesting them, criticizing them, and denouncing their false values. She denounces the neuroses of culture such as the passion for gain, the false sexual patterns that publicity proposes, the commercial exploitation of woman; she denounces the imposture of social myths, the taboos which further injustices of the worst kind; she denounces the social stereotypes which divide men and give them false security; she denounces the pseudo-values which alienate man and reduce him to slavery instead of helping him grow towards freedom.

But the Church will never fulfill the role which is hers in the world of man without a profound catharsis. The present structure of the christian religion is, in general, dated; it is a medieval structure which corresponds to a rural society and which is adapted to a cosmocentric vision of the world; it is the vehicle of left-overs from a past age. The ecclesiastical and religious system in its present form has no place in the world of man. It is seen by men as a useless accessory that society more or less rejects as a foreign body. The present system prevents the Church from adequately fulfilling her triple dimension in favor of the world and man.

A catharsis of the Church is essential. The reforms realized since the Council are too timid, too insignificant; they don't really get at the heart of the structure; they are too slow. The Church constantly seems to be lagging behind and the gap between her and the world is getting wider. This discord between religion and life within the world is not christian. This is why books have been written with titles such as "The Church in the State of Mortal Sin" and "The Church is Going to Hell." A radical conversion of the Church is necessary: this conversion is a complete turn-about from the vision she has of herself and the world; it means renouncing a system which is irreparably behind the world and which must disappear. This system is like a screen which hides and stifles the mystery of Christ's presence and prevents christians from fulfilling their mission in the world.

### III The Church Re-examined

To be able to exercise her three-fold role in society, the Church must give herself a new prophetic structure, a new communal structure and a new religious structure.

#### 1. A New Prophetic Structure

The Church is bearer of the Word of God. She is not the owner of the Word; the Word does not belong to her. She is only its servant. This Word belongs to the men to whom it is addressed; it is a Word for men. The function of the Church is double vis-à-vis the Word: on one hand she must grasp the Word, understand it, interpret it; on the other hand she must proclaim it to men.

There is therefore a double problem that the Church must face: how can she announce the Word of God to *men today?* and how can she make her voice heard in *a world* that is being built without her? The first problem concerns the Church in her role towards secular man; the second concerns the Church in her function towards the world of man, society.

How then can the Church establish a contact between contemporary man and the God who saves in Jesus Christ? The Church speaks a language which is incomprehensible to the man of today. The Word of God has been imprisoned, so to speak, in mental and philosophical categories which are foreign to the mental world of today's man . . . who remains deaf to the message of Jesus because this message is transmitted to him in a foreign tongue. There is so great a distance between the mental world of contemporary man and that in which the Word of God is expressed in the Gospel and the Church that every pastoral formule is nothing but an ineffective panacea. At the heart of the problem there is a question of hermeneutics. The Word of God comes to us in a human language which is a system of conventional signs. For the theologian, it is a question of discovering, beyond these signs, the reality hidden beneath the word, a question of "going back" from the human word to the Word of God and then from the Word of God to that which is objectively real. We are face to face here with a difficult problem of interpretation. In the light of new knowledge, the Church must proceed to a new interpretation of the Gospel.

The liberal Protestant theologians were the first to set themselves the task of seeking a solution to the problem. Bultmann opened the way by setting up a vast enterprise of demythologization by which he attempted, thanks to an existential interpretation, to arrive at a new understanding of human existence according to the Gospel. Many were the liberal theologians who accepted Bultmann's ideas and pushed them even further.

Until very recently, most Catholic theologians have been satisfied with severely criticizing this school of thought. They are intimidated by dogma, or rather by a certain static concept of dogma, or better still by a certain idolatry of dogmatic formulas. Catholic exegetes, for their part, have finally placed the new scien-

tific methods at the service of exegesis. Catholic theologians are beginning timidly to reinterpret dogma in the light of the new understanding that man has of himself and according to the methods of historical criticism. The most daring attempt in this direction has been that of Leslie Dewart who has proposed a de-hellenized interpretation of dogma in his book *The Future of Belief*. Very generally, we can say that Catholic theologians try to solve the problem of secular man in two complementary ways: that of historicity and that of anthropology.

First of all, historicity. Theology must take more and more seriously the historical character of revelation and man. Man is not in time as in a receptacle. He is historical; he is subject to time. Time is a dimension of his being. Man is a capacity of being who creates himself through existential decisions. The Word of God addressed to man is historical also; it is situated in history and is taken hold of by historical beings. And when we speak of historicity, we speak of relativity at the same time. Dogma or a dogmatic formula is an historical understanding that the Church has of the historical understanding that the Apostles had of the historical Word of Jesus. Since it is thus, it is imperative that we stop speaking of the Church's possession of "eternal truth" and that we start speaking of historical truth. What was truth for man yesterday is not necessarily truth for man today. The fact that dogma is necessarily characterized by historicity and, in consequence, by relativity, must be treated with the greatest attention. Theology has the duty of grasping revealed truth beyond historical relativity and of giving an interpretation of it which is valid for secular man.

Secondly, anthropology. The Word of God is a word *for man*. Up until now, Catholic theology was especially interested in the Word of God *in se* as Word of God. But it is paying more and more attention to the fact that this Word is addressed to man. Man's knowledge is extremely important in validly interpreting the Word of God. Theology must know man, not only in his ontological structure, but above all in his existential condition. All the positive contributions of the philosophy of existence, of personalist philosophy, of anthropology and of the other sciences of man must be integrated into our knowledge of man. This



understanding of man must preside over our understanding and our interpretation of the revealed data. Theology must commit itself to an anthropological interpretation of dogma. To respond to the needs of secular man, theology must be not so much "a theology for man as an anthropology for God" (Abraham Heschel). Rahner has successfully shown the essential link between anthropology and theology. Anthropology is the "locus" of theology. We can say nothing about God without also speaking of man, and vice-versa. Anthropology is not a section of theology but theology itself in its deepest dimension as a doctrine about the God of salvation.<sup>12</sup>

Secular man and his relationship with the Word of God is therefore the first pole around which revolves a whole series of problems set before the prophetic function of the Church. The second concerns the Church in her relationship to the secular city as such.

What should the attitude of the Church be towards the secular city which is there before her? Should her attitude be that of distant suspicion, massive condemnation, or even narrow integralism? This last expression, that we find in Rahner,<sup>13</sup> designates in this instance a theoretical and practical attitude according to which the life of man can be projected and directed in all its details according to the universal principles proclaimed by the Church and controlled by her in their application. Since the Church has the role of proclaiming and interpreting general principles, she would also possess the right, *de jure*, of directing the world. This integralism would actually be an attitude of interference in the secular city. And it would imply the following presupposition: that the Church possesses a reserve of general principles sufficient to solve all the new moral questions which arise in the secular world. But the Church is incapable of affirming how to settle in a practical and effective way such problems as the war in Vietnam, the population explosion, world poverty or racial discrimination. The Church is not the unique and absolute guide that we must turn to for solutions of the human and moral problems of the secular city. She is not everything in the human and moral domains; she is only a part of the whole. It must be admitted therefore that the Church is vastly incompetent before the secular city. It is true that she can

set out certain limits *ratione peccati*, that she can proclaim general principles and affirm the ultimate finality of everything. But she can neither orientate nor manipulate, in a concrete way, the history of the secular city.

What then is the Church's mission towards the secular city? Since the Church cannot, in the name of her doctrine and her rights, manipulate society in its concrete decisions, her mission, according to Rahner,<sup>14</sup> must be "prophetic." What does this mean? In a pluralistic society which functions well, each group has the right to make itself heard in the elaboration of decisions which concern society in its totality by presenting a program of action which treats of the ends to attain and the means to accomplish them. And the Church is such a group in secular society. The Church, then, must have a program of action to present if she wishes to be faithful to her mission to the Word. This "prophetic" function implies a new manner of speaking. She can express herself no longer in abstract formulas, in vague suggestions or in rigid dogmatic principles but rather in courageous hypotheses which are adapted to concrete contingencies. This could eliminate all the mystery involved in the Church's manner of exercising her prophetic function in favor of the world.<sup>15</sup>

The problem which arises immediately is the following: since the Church is so incompetent before the secular city, how will she be able to propose this kind of a program of action? How will she be able to exercise her prophetic function? She will be able to do this only when her structure is renewed and when she develops a theology of social realities. The first condition that will allow the Church to fulfill her prophetic role in the world is the development of a theology of social realities. In this line, Cox speaks of a "theology of revolution"; J. Baptist Metz calls for a "political theology" and Rahner writes of a "practical ecclesiological cosmology."

Cox is impressed by the fact that the secular city is subject to constant mobility, to abrupt and rapid changes, and to truly revolutionary mutations. Recent history shows that the Church is suspicious of rapid changes and revolution, and that she desperately hangs on to the established order. The Church is always behind; she is forever losing the revolution, precisely because she is in-

capable of exercising her prophetic function in revolutionary situations. It is therefore necessary to develop this theology of revolution as soon as possible so that the Church will be able to worthily exercise her prophetic mission in the secular world.<sup>16</sup>

Metz, for his part, starts with the fact that the christian message contains essentially a social dimension. Traditional catholic theology, as well as the liberal, dialectical and radical theologies of the Protestants, generally limits itself to the intimate sphere of the person and his individual relations with God, thus neglecting the political social aspect of revelation. Theology must rediscover this essential dimension of revelation. It is not a question of mixing-up faith and politics as is done by certain well-known reactionary movements. The hermeneutic problem here does not refer to the relationship between dogma and history spoken of earlier; it refers to the relationship between theory and practice, between faith and action in society. Political theology is a positive attempt to formulate the eschatological message by taking the conditions of contemporary secular society into consideration. There is a tension between the eschatological message of Jesus and social-political reality. The eschatological promises (liberty, peace, justice, reconciliation) cannot be envisaged in function of the isolated individual. It is obvious, of course, that these promises cannot be simply identified with some present condition of society, a condition which might be valid but which is always precarious. These promises must inspire and incite us to make them incarnate in the social-political reality of the secular city. This political theology is a prerequisite for the Church's exercise of her prophetic function.<sup>17</sup>

Rahner thinks that the theology that must be elaborated is a practical ecclesiological cosmology. The program of action that the Church must propose through her prophetic function come both from an analysis of the present situation and from the conclusions drawn from revealed principles (v.g. world aid fund). This theology would study the ever-new relationship between the Church and the world according to given situations. This relationship cannot be considered in other theological disciplines "for it evolves at the same rhythm as the transformations of the secular world which constitutes the situation of the Church."

And this situation cannot be the object of the systematic theological disciplines. A new science is therefore necessary, a science which would have a very definite object and method and which would appeal to many other theological disciplines (such as ecclesiology, christology, etc.) and to certain sciences of man (such as sociology and anthropology).<sup>18</sup>

The second condition which will allow the Church to fulfill her prophetic role in society today is the renewal of her communal structure.

## 2. New Communal Structures

If the Church is to truly exercise her kerygmatic or prophetic function, she must reform her social, economic and hierarchical structure, her concept and exercise of authority and her administrative, "political" and canonical system. This structure is so dated that it renders the Church almost incapable of fulfilling her kerygmatic function in contemporary society. For the present structure speaks a language which often contradicts the renewed message that the Church must proclaim.

Vatican II wished to renew the Church by beginning with the idea of "people of God." Many believed and still believe that this idea has great potential for renewal in the Church. Despite this general opinion, however, it must be recognized that this theme can fit in very well with a hierarchical preoccupation. For whoever speaks of "people of God," speaks soon afterwards of "constitution" and "universal government." The idea of the Church as the people of God seems to weigh heavily in favor of a privileged representation of the universal Church and, as a result, to stress the specific structures of her own government. We can truly ask ourselves if this notion of the Church can be an effective remedy to the danger of clericalism and if it will allow for an adequate renewal of ecclesiastical structures.<sup>19</sup>

It is not all that easy to base the idea of the Church as the people of God on a sound and extended exegesis. The primitive community did not conceive of itself primarily or fundamentally as the people of God. It is true that she did sometimes see herself in this light either to identify herself with the true Israel (Rom. 9:14-33; Gal. 6:16; 2 Cor. 6:16) or to point out both the con-



tinuity and the discontinuity between herself and Israel, the people of God. Fr. Audet affirms that this theme of the Church as the people of God did not have that great a place in the primitive Church's self-consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

To define herself, the primitive christian community chose another direction. What is striking in the New Testament writings is the extraordinary abundance of a vocabulary centered around the idea of *christian fraternity*. The use of the expressions "brothers" and "sisters" by which the christians referred to each other among themselves (Rom. 12:1; 16:14; 16:23) surely goes back to Jesus himself (Lk. 22:23; Mt. 23:8; Jn. 20:17). This title "brothers" was not reserved for the members of a local community; it was used for everyone within the whole Church (Acts 28:14; 28:15-16). Wherever they were, christians recognized each other as members of one and the same fraternity which was extended everywhere that the Word was announced (1 Pet. 2:17; 5:9: *adèlphotès*). It was at the eucharistic assemblies that the first christians were able to become the most conscious of forming an original "fraternity"—a fraternity characterized by an experience of "life" received in faith and shared in love and mutual service. The fraternity was envisaged as a benefit of the christian community equally shared by all its members. It is evident that in its inner, everyday life the primitive Church viewed itself first and foremost as a *fraternity*.

This notion of the Church has numerous and far-reaching consequences. It is suggestive of a unique structure and of a very specific style of communal life. It is on the basis of this idea of the Church as a fraternity that structural renewal, so urgently demanded, must be worked out. If the Church is essentially a fraternity, the principal questions she must face will concern *core-communities*: these are the key to the renewal that the Church must bring about. For, by the very nature of things, these *core-communities* are the original and normal place where the fraternity is born, grows and lives in fulness.

One cannot have a christian fraternity without having certain conditions which are proper to it. To become the place where the christian heritage is lived in the integrity of it challenging and creative power, the christian fraternity requires certain concrete

arrangements, a particular kind of structure and an original manner of exercising authority.

To be a force which challenges the false values of the contemporary world, to respond to the urgent problems of the human community, to exercise a creative role in our world, to answer the deepest aspirations of man today, the Church—if she is to do these things—must re-form herself on the basis of the idea of fraternity. The Church must be put back on her feet: instead of having it supported by its hierarchical peak (the clerics), it must be put back on its normal foundation, that is, the fraternal community. The Church must deeply modify its social structures to allow for the development of the fraternal structures of the core-communities. Only the setting up of these core-communities as poor, unclerical, un-Roman, unpolitical brotherhoods, can make room for the mobility, flexibility and freedom the Church needs to fulfill her role in society and to have a worthwhile impact on the contemporary world. This core-community must exercise a secular ministry. "Christianity can truly be manifested only if it emerges from the secular condition of man."<sup>21</sup>

### 3. New Religious Structures

It is certain that this notion of the Church as a fraternity implies a movement of declericalization, desacramentalization and desacralization. It is just as sure that the fraternal community is destined to be more apostolic than cultic more secular than religious. But even if this is so, the necessity for this community to keep its cultic and religious dimension must be strongly affirmed. Any faith in God, even religious faith, by its very nature, tends to gradually grow into religion; and any community of faith tends to express itself communally in a prayerful and worshipful manner. It is true, according to the New Testament, that "true religion" is to come to the aid of widows and to help those who are in misery; the New Testament also says that the worship rendered to God must be "in spirit and truth." But the faith of man, an incarnate spirit, needs to be expressed in worship and religion through signs and rites.

The typical error of many so-called "evolved" christians is to think that faith can survive without religion, without religious

practice, and to believe that if humanity is to be true, real and authentic, it must become or remain profane. This is an illusion which threatens our technical civilization. Studies in the history of religions, such as those of Eliade on myth and Otto on the sacred, force us to conclude that the sacred and the religious are categories of human existence. It is interesting to note the convergence of these conclusions with the discoveries of psychologists such as Jung. The discovery of below-surface (unconscious) aspects of the human soul which survive after the most disrupting surface transformations have showed us to what extent this soul is and remains religious to its very depth. "In reality," says L. Bouyer, "natural humanity is not at all a profane humanity. Nothing in man is more superficial and less natural than the profane. The sacred is not some secondary and fictitious addition to the human as such. Nothing inhuman is at home within the sacred, at least in its roots. Humanity which is particularly and fully human—and it is such a humanity that christianity claims—could not, therefore, because of that, be desacralized. A desacralized humanity could not become christian simply because it would cease to be human. The humanity of christianity must be a humanity whose sense of the sacred is recuperated, saved and transfigured in the redemptive incarnation."<sup>22</sup> The incarnation, restores and transforms the primitive, original form of natural sacredness within which everything was seen as the divine domain. The fully human character of the religious fact and the deeply-rooted religiosity of man must be affirmed, therefore, against certain trends of thought, presently in style, which pretend that religious sentiment is a weakness of man and a handicap to him in his growth to human maturity.

The fraternal Church community must create rites and signs and structure its worship in such a way as to recuperate what is valid in the religious sentiment of man and what is valid in the idea of sacred time, space and rite. The cultic and religious expressions of faith, such as they exist in the Church at the present time, no longer correspond adequately to new expressions of faith. It is not too surprising then that they are rejected for they are incapable of channelling the deep exigencies of the religious and the sacred which are in man. If the Church, as a fraternal

community, succeeds in recuperating the religious and the sacred, she will truly be able to help man situate himself in harmony with his world. Just as in past days the form of religion allowed man to establish his relation with the world of nature, the "new" religion will allow man to re-establish the balance of his relation with the world of man.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Many of the ideas in this section are taken from an article by K. Rahner, "L'homme moderne devant la religion," in *Est-il possible aujourd'hui de croire?* (Paris, 1966), p. 57-102.

<sup>2</sup> A. Richardson, *Le Procès de la religion* (Paris, 1967), p. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup> A. Dondeyne, *La foi écoute le monde* (Paris, 1964), p. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> K. Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. Schillebeeckx, *Dieu et l'homme* (Bruxelles, 1965), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> E. Schillebeeckx, "La théologie du renouveau parle de Dieu," in *La théologie du renouveau*, t. 1 (Montréal, 1968), p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. Dondeyne, *op. cit.*, p. 20-23.

<sup>8</sup> *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto, 1962).

<sup>9</sup> J. Onimus, *Face au monde actuel* (Paris, 1968), p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> G. Vahanian, "La question de la fin de l'ère religieuse dans sa signification théologique," in *Concilium*, 16(1965) 105-113.

<sup>11</sup> *Résistance et Soumission* (Genève, 1963), p. 120-121.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. K. Rahner, "Grundsätzliche Ueberlegungen zur Anthropologie und Protologie im Rahmen der theologie," in *Mysterium salutis*, t. 2 (Zurich, 1967) p. 415-419.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. K. Rahner, "Réflexions théologiques sur le problème de la sécularisation," in *La théologie du renouveau*, t. 1, p. 258.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. K. Rahner, *id.*, p. 265.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*, p. 257-279.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. H. Cox, *The Secular City* (New York, 1966).

<sup>17</sup> J. B. Metz, "Les rapports entre l'Englise et le monde à la lumière d'une théologie politique," in *La théologie du renouveau*, t. 2, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> K. Rahner, "Réflexions théologiques sur le problème de la sécularisation," in *La théologie du renouveau*, t. 1, p. 270-274.

<sup>19</sup> Many of the ideas in this section are taken from an article by Fr. Audet, "Jésus dans la communauté chrétienne primitive," in *Communauté chrétienne*, 38-39(1968) 150-176.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*, p. 168-170.

<sup>21</sup> H. Denis and J. Frisque, *L'Eglise à l'épreuve* (Paris, 1968), p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> L. Bouyer, *Le rite et l'homme* (Paris, 1962), p. 25.



## BYZANTINE CATHOLICISM

JANUARIUS IZZO, O.F.M.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper, *Byzantine Catholicism*, as proposed to me, would be much too vast to be treated in its entirety. Nor do I think that it would be appropriate at this time to give a detailed history of the Byzantine Churches in union with Rome, with their origins, usages, and present statistics. This information is easily accessible in encyclopediae, books of general interest on this subject, popular pamphlets, and the various Catholic directories.

Neither do I think it necessary to justify the existence of the Byzantine rite or churches in full communion with the Apostolic See of Rome, as distinct from the Latin Rite or Roman Church. This has been amply done in pontifical and conciliar documents, the most recent and important of which is the Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, of the Second Vatican Council.

Since we are Franciscans and engaged in a Franciscan Educational Conference, I feel that it would be more germane and profitable to examine our rôle as Franciscans in regard to our work among the faithful of the various branches towards the Byzantine rite in the past, and our obligations towards this apostolate in the future.

Perhaps some of the things I express will seem polemic or exaggerated (and perhaps I risk the modern heresy of being as it is said, "irrelevant") but they would be hoped to provoke some thought on the matter; again, to understand some of my observations we must at the outset place ourselves for a short time in the mind-set or spirit of the Byzantine ethos in which many things which to the dispassionate and analytical Latin or Western mentality appear un-essential or negligible, are as a matter of fact of great importance (at least subjectively speaking) to the Oriental.

The Second Vatican Council, in its decree on the Oriental Church, has been most explicit on the conservation of their spiritual heritage:

"6. All members of the Oriental rites should know and be convinced that they can and should preserve their legitimate liturgical rite and their established way of life, and that these may not be altered except to obtain for themselves an organic improvement. Easterners themselves should honor all these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an even greater knowledge and a more exact use of them, and, if in their regard they have fallen away from them because of the contingencies of times and persons, they should take pains to return to their ancestral traditions. (Orient. Ecclesiarum).

This is in agreement with the pastoral concerns of the same Council, which sees in the Oriental Churches a witness that one can at the same time be of the Byzantine, Coptic, Armenian and other rites and, while preserving these rites in their integrity, still be in full communion with the Apostolic See of Rome, and thus a great aid towards the reunion of our Oriental Separated Brethren (Cfr. *Orient. Eccl.*, 24; *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 17). However to do this, the Oriental Catholics must really show that they have faithfully preserved their rite while in communion with Rome.

Furthermore, the Council notes about those of us who, as in these United States of America, or Franciscans in the Middle East live and work among Orientals:

"Those who, by reason of their office or apostolic ministries, are in frequent contact with the Eastern Churches or their faithful should be instructed according as their office demands in the knowledge and veneration of the rites, discipline, doctrine, history and character of the members of the Eastern Rites. To enhance the efficacy of their apostolate, Religious and associations of the Latin rite working in Eastern countries or among Eastern faithful are earnestly counseled to found houses or even provinces of the Eastern Rite, as far as this can be done." (*Or. Eccl.*, n. 6.)

Let us proceed then to examine the historical rôle of the

Franciscans among Catholics (and among our Separated Brethren) of the Byzantine Rite, to note some observations on particular aspects of the liturgical, devotional, and monastic life of the Byzantine Churches, and finally to offer some suggestions as to the direction to be taken by the Franciscans in the future as regards these same particular Churches within the Church Universal.

## II. HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE FRANCISCAN IN THE BYZANTINE RITE:

### A. Some pre-notes about the work of Religious Orders in general in the Byzantine Rite.

It is unfortunate but true, that while the members of the Religious Orders and Institutes of the Latin Rite have done much to bring the benefits of Western Civilization to the peoples of the Oriental rites, so often torn by war, or suffering from the oppressive yoke of the Turks and other invaders, or benighted by poverty and illiteracy, still they have, with few exceptions, been great propagators of the Latin rite, to the detriment of the Oriental Rites. They have sought to either replace the Eastern rites in their entirety with the Latin rite, or introduce Latin rite customs to replace those legitimate usages of the Orientals which they considered as un-orthodox, ignorant, superstitious, or conducive to schism. The standard by which they measured everything religious was the Latin Rite. This can hardly be wondered at, since the standards by which they measured all other social and intellectual realities was western civilization particularly as found in the country of origin of the missionary himself.

If there was a question of Oriental Rite members of a predominantly Latin Religious Institute, the liturgical and monastic discipline of that Institute took preference over the liturgical and monastic usages of the Oriental Rites whether it be a question of the form of the Religious Habit, the season and mode of fasting, the celebration of the Divine Office or its recitation in private, etc. Only Latin rite theology and traditions were taught to the candidate for Holy Orders.

An exception must be noted here in regards to the Jesuit Fathers,

who since their entrance into various Oriental apostolates, particularly in the 1930's, have striven to observe the traditions of the Byzantine, Chaldean, and other rites very purely, although I would say that some improvements might be made even among them.

As for the so-called Byzantine-rite Religious Orders, usually (and incorrectly as we shall see) referred to as "Basilians" of various types, they too have been the instruments of great latinization among their Oriental brethren. This, too, is only natural, since they were reformed usually after the pattern of the Jesuits or Redemptorists, and were trained mostly in Latin rite schools, and adopted Latin style Religious Habits and usages.

Other factors leading to the Latinization of Oriental Rite Catholics were: 1) the idea that the more *Latin* one was, the more *Catholic* one was; 2) the great admiration in the past which Oriental peoples had for western civilization in all its ramifications; 3) European colonialism; 4) the low level solid theological formation among most of the Orthodox; 5) the dearth of written material on Oriental traditions as opposed to the Latin Rite manuals in which the Western traditions were set forth with great clarity and order; 6) the "facility" of the Latin rite, in which for instance, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass can be celebrated in its unsung or low form in 20 minutes or so as opposed to the hour or more required for the prescribed sung Byzantine Divine Liturgy.

How have the Franciscan Friars fared in regard to the above-mentioned abuses?

### B. The Role of the Franciscans in particular:

#### FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF THE BYZANTINE RITE

The Franciscan Order is bound by special and age-old bonds to the Christian Orient, especially in the Middle East. These bonds extend back to the time of St. Francis himself, who in 1219, went on a missionary journey to Egypt, Syria and the Holy Land, leaving to his sons the Friars a special predilection for the lands where Jesus lived. In the XIV c. the Franciscans became the custodians of the Holy Places.



Unfortunately, at first the friars were devoted to the latinization of Middle East, which often provoked the displeasure of the Oriental Christians. However, in the XVIII c. there was a movement to adapt the Franciscan Third Order Secular to Oriental usages in the Middle East.

In 1766 Theodosius VI Dahan, Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, complained to Rome that the Holy Land Friars were continuing to introduce the Latin Rite among his flock. The Holy See took some steps to discourage the continuation of this practice, but with but sporadic success. Even today, there are but one or two Byzantine Rite Friars among all those who are working in the Middle East.

However, in Egypt there is today an Egyptian Commissariat which among its members numbers: 1 Coptic Bishop, 12 Coptic priests, 1 Melkite priest, 1 Maronite priest, and 20 Latin Rite priests. From studying with some of them, and visiting Egypt, I would tend to say that our confreres of the Oriental Rites there are not particularly faithful to the traditions, especially the liturgical, devotional, and monastic traditions of their respective Rites. Nearly all are bi-ritual and habitually celebrate in the Latin Rite which they find more "practical".

The first recorded attempt to introduce the Slavic tradition of the Byzantine Rite among the Friars was made by Father Stanislaus Aljancic, O.F.M., a Slovenian who wished to dedicate himself to missionary work in Yugoslavian Macedonia. In November 11, 1928, at Krizevci, after obtaining his doctorate from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, Fr. Stanislaus obtained a rescript from the Holy See transferring him to the Byzantine Slavonic Rite. He was soon followed by two other confreres, and they adapted their Franciscan habit to the traditions of the Byzantine religious Habit: they kept the brown tunic and white cord of St. Francis as their under-habit (*pod-rijasa*), wearing the typical black Byzantine over-habit, or *rijasa*, substituting for their capuch the black monastic hat with veil (*klobuk*). Unfortunately, this wonderful start was doomed to failure because of government opposition, and they had to return to Slovenia, where the movement died out.

An intermediate effort to have Franciscan priests of the By-

zantine Slavonic Rite occurred here in our own United States of America, when the Ruthenian Rite Bishop Basil Takach requested some friars of the Slovak Commissariat to become bi-ritual in order to alleviate the scarcity of clergy in the then Apostolic Exarchate of Pittsburgh. The Holy See granted eight friars of the Slovak Commissariat the privilege of bi-ritualism on March 9, 1944. After about 20 years, when the number of secular clergy in the Eparchy had sufficiently increased, most of the friars returned to the Latin Rite.

A need and desire among the Ukrainian Catholics of the United States for a Byzantine Slavonic branch of the Order of Friars Minor led the late beloved Father Josaphat Annenevich to establish the first permanent and fruitful foundation of its kind in our Order. On October 28, 1947, the independent Commissariat of St. Mary of the Angels of the Byzantine Slavonic Rite was erected, with its seat at New Canaan Connecticut. This Commissariat, as may be expected, passed through many vicissitudes. Its early superiors were all staunch members of the Latin Rite. The Byzantine Rite friars were drawn from and had to work within the framework of both the Ukrainian and Ruthenian traditions and Eparchies. There were conflicts between those who strove for liturgical and disciplinary purity and those who clung to latinized forms and mentalities which they felt were more "Catholic" and less suspect for being "Orthodox". For various reasons, a group of 13 professed friars, including one priest and one deacon, separated themselves from the Commissariat and the Franciscan Order, striking off on their own as the Brotherhood of St. Francis of the New Skete. Through all these trials, the Commissariat of St. Mary of the Angels has preserved, and striven for even greater fidelity to the traditions of the Byzantine Slavonic Rite.

### Conventual Friars Minor

After the First World War, the Conventual Franciscan Friars established a foundation among the Romenian Byzantine Catholics of Transylvania, and in 1929, four friars transferred to the Byzantine rite. When, in 1948, the mission was unfortunately suppressed by the Communists, they numbered twenty priests

of the Byzantine Rite and six monasteries, besides clerics and non-clerical brothers.

In 1940, the Province of Padua, Italy, founded a mission in Albania attached to which were conventual friars of the Albanian Byzantine rite. When the Italians were expelled from Albania, in 1944, as a result of World War II, some of these friars kept their adherence to the Byzantine rite to continue their apostolic work, this time among the faithful of the Italo-Greek-Albanian Byzantine Rite in Italy, especially in the Exarchate of Lungro in Calabria.

The Friars Minor Conventual are also active among the Bulgarians of the Byzantine Rite, having founded a mission in southern Bulgaria in 1939. Today they have over a dozen friars of the Byzantine Rite. In 1967 one of their number, Father George Eldarov, O.F.M.,Conv., who was also a peritus at Vatican II, was elevated to the rank of a Right Reverend Mitred Archimandrite and made Apostolic Visitor for all Bulgarian Catholics outside of Bulgaria.

In all, the Conventual Friars Minor have about 50 priests of the Byzantine Rite.

### Capuchin Friars Minor

The Capuchin Franciscan friars have exercised a long and fruitful apostolate among the faithful of the Ethiopian and Malabarese rites. Between 1932 and 1940 the Capuchins of the Dutch province established an apostolic center of the Byzantine-slavonic rite in Lubieszow, Poland. They were constrained to leave Poland after the Second World War and in 1953 established at Voorburg, Holland, a monastery of the Byzantine-slavonic rite where they have about 5 priests of the Byzantine rite.

### III. SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING PARTICULAR INSTITUTES OF THE BYZANTINE RITE

In this section we would like to examine at least some of the traditional institutes of the Byzantine Church and to comment on how faithfully they are observed by Catholics of that Rite.

## A. Liturgical Life

### 1. The Place of Worship:

A Byzantine Rite Church should have an Ikonostasis (a wall covered with ikons and pierced by 3 doors) separating the sanctuary (Bema, Oltar) from the narthex. It is a liturgical necessity and the ikons on it are incensed during the Divine Liturgy (Mass) and the doors are opened and closed at various points during the service. Catholic Byzantine churches often lack this apurtenance with the excuse that the laity wish to *see* the Liturgy; here we are up against a typical latinization. The true Oriental attitude to the Divine Liturgy is one of Mystery and symbolism; in any case, the entire Liturgy should be sung out loud so that there is no difficulty in following what is going on and understanding it, especially if, according to the Oriental tradition, the Liturgy is celebrated in the local vernacular. Here again, the Catholics, especially the Ukrainians, are far behind their Orthodox brethren and even the other Byzantine Catholics in adopting the local vernacular.

The altar should be square and not rectangular (oblong), in fact it is usually a simple cube covered with silk damask. Among the Byzantine Catholics the altar often becomes a baroque monstrosity with gradines, candlesticks and flower vases on the altar, lace altar clothes, and gingerbread decoration. Byzantine tradition forbids anything on the altar except the antimension, the altar Gospel, handcross, purificator, liturgical lance and spoon and, in most churches, a simple tabernacle in the form of a domed shrine with the Eucharist reserved in a small casket.

In regard to the antimension (antimins), a rectangular cloth containing relics of the Saints sewn into it and consecrated with Chrism (Myron) by a Bishop, it is traditionally found folded up under the Gospel book on the altar, and is spread out and used as a corporal during the Liturgy. It should have a protective covering, the eileton, made of colored (usually red) silk in which it is wrapped when folded up and which is spread out under the antimension during the Liturgy. Even though it may be used as the Byzantine equivalent for the Latin *petra sacra*, or portable altar, the antimension should traditionally be used even on a con-



secrated altar. The Ukrainian and Ruthenian Byzantine Catholics, following the latinizing Synod of Zamosc (1720), place the antimimension underneath the altar cloths of their altars and use a latin style corporal on top of the altar cloths during Liturgy, in imitation of the latin mode for the use of the *petra sacra* and with the excuse that the antimimension does not wear out or become soiled as quickly (it is quite simple to obtain another antimimension when the one in use has become worn or soiled). Another deviation from tradition is the use of a Latin corporal on *top* of the antimimension (rather than celebrating directly upon the antimimension) as is done among the Melkite Catholics. The Ukrainians and Ruthenians have given up the use of a flattened sponge to clean the antimimension after Communion.

Red wine is prescribed as the element for the Precious Blood, because of its natural symbolism, but Oriental Catholics use white wine like their Latin brethren for fear of staining altar cloths and purificators, since they have adopted white linen purificators instead of the red ones traditionally used.

## 2. The Divine Liturgy

We have had occasion to mention the language used in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. We may note here also, that while among the Orthodox a "low" or "recited" Liturgy is unknown, and even if the priest is alone (an unusual circumstance) he will sing all the parts by himself, the Catholics of the Byzantine rite have introduced the custom of the low or recited liturgy for convenience and especially to shorten the time required for its celebration. Usually they do not use incense at these recited Liturgies, another departure from Byzantine tradition.

According to the typical liturgical books of the Byzantine Rite, there are three forms of the Divine Liturgy; the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, and the Liturgy of the Presanctified. During the Great Lent (that which precedes the Pasch), it is forbidden to celebrate the Divine Liturgy except on Saturdays (D.L. of St. John Chrysostom) and Sundays (D.L. of St. Basil), all other days being aliturgical, as was once the case also in the Latin Rite. On Wednesdays and Fridays, however, it is permitted to celebrate

the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, analogous to the Solemn Communion Service of Good Friday in the Latin Rite, and which includes the Office of Vespers. The Catholics of the Byzantine Rite, with few exceptions, ignore the Presanctified Liturgy altogether, or celebrate it only on the first Wednesday of Lent. In 1966, in the Pontifical Ukrainian Catholic Seminary of St. Josaphat in Rome, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom was celebrated in the morning of the first Wednesday of Lent and on the evening of the same day the Presanctified Liturgy was celebrated for the first and last time during that Great Lent! This in a Pontifical seminary where there is no dearth of liturgists nor singers. On the other days of Lent, which are strictly aliturgical, namely Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday (and more often than not, on Wednesday and Friday also) the Byzantine Catholics, especially the Ukrainians and Ruthenians, do violence to tradition by celebrating the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

The "host" used for the Byzantine Liturgy is a leavened round loaf or bun imprinted on its upper surface with a seal consisting of a cross and the Greek letters IC XC NIKA (Jesus Christ conquers); according to the rubrics, a separate loaf (sometimes five) should be used for each Liturgy and it should be fresh, and it is cut with a liturgical lance or knife into a central cubical Host (the "Lamb") and commemorative triangular particles (in memory of the Saints, the living and the dead) during a liturgical office called the Proskomedia which immediately precedes the Divine Liturgy. The Byzantine Catholics often have these cubes and commemorative particles already precut, and sometimes even dessicated, and just trace the outlines of them with the knife during the proskomedia.

The Sacred vessels should be covered with three veils, one for the diskos (paten), one for the chalice, and a large one, the Aer, which covers them both; many Byzantine Catholics omit the diskos veil and reduce that of the chalice to a latin-style pall.

### 3. The Holy Mysteries (Sacraments)

#### a. The Mysteries of Christian Initiation

It is the tradition of the Byzantine Church to give all three

Sacraments or Mysteries of Christian Initiation at the same time, whether the initiate be adult or infant. Thus, the infant is baptized by a triple immersion, chrismated (confirmed) by the priest immediately afterwards, and then given Holy Communion, usually only under the species of the Precious Blood on the tip of the Communion Spoon.

The Byzantine Church places great emphasis on baptism by immersion, and indeed, many controversies with the Latins have centered about this point. Many Byzantine Catholics now baptize in the Latin fashion by infusion (pouring), or use a compromise in which they sit the baby in a basin of water while pouring some water over his head. This is the cause of much scandal to the Orthodox.

In regard to infant Communion, and ancient practice of the universal Church, the Byzantine Catholics have given up this practice due to Latin polemics which considered this practice "indecent" even though in other writings they insist on the *ex opere operato* value of the Holy Mysteries.

#### b. The Mystery of Holy Repentance (Confession)

The Byzantine Church administers the Mystery of Holy Repentance to the penitent by having him confess his sins to a priest while both stand before a stand on which are placed an ikon and the holy Gospels and sometimes the hand cross. After having confessed his sins (often in a merely general way), the penitent kneels, and the priest, placing the end of his large stole (epitrachelion) on the penitent's head, pronounces the words of absolution (deprecatory in the Greek tradition, deprecatory and indicative in the Slavonic tradition) and traces the sign of the cross on the penitents head through the stole. Among the Byzantine Catholics in most places, the Latin style Confessional Box has been adopted and the imposition of the stole and hand becomes impossible, as well as the confession done out in the open visible (but not audible) to the congregation as a sign that repentance and God's forgiveness come through the whole Church and are not merely private and secret acts of the penitent and priest.

### c. The Mystery of Holy Anointing (of the Sick)

According to the Byzantine tradition, the priest (if possible more than one priest, preferably 7 priests) administers the Mystery or Sacrament of Holy Anointing to a sick Christian (not necessarily mortally ill or in extremis) in a rite during which the priest himself blesses the Oil of the Sick and anoints the ill person by dipping a brush or cotton tipped stick into the blessed oil and anointing him on the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, lips, breast, and both sides of the hands (the places anointed may vary). Whatever blessed oil is left over is either burned in a votive lamp or poured over the body of the deceased if he should die. Byzantine Catholics, instead of blessing a new quantity of oil each time they give this Mystery as is prescribed by the ceremonial directives, keep the blessed oil and use it for various persons until it is used up. This has the practical disadvantage of keeping blessed oil which may pick up unpleasant odors or become rancid. They generally do not use a brush for anointing.

### d. The Mystery of Holy Matrimony (Crowning)

There is nothing worthy of mention in regard to divergencies between the practice of Byzantine Orthodox and Catholics in this Sacrament.

### e. The Mystery of Holy Ordination

The only notable departure from Byzantine tradition in this Mystery is the introduction of the *traditio* or *porrectio instrumentorum* in imitation of the Latin Ordination ceremonies.

## B. Spiritual and Devotional Life

### 1. Hesychasm and the Rosary

Byzantine Spirituality revolves about the practice of Hesychasm (wrongly identified by some Latin theologians with Western Quietism or Eastern Palamitism), a mystical method dating from about the fourth century, having its roots in O.T. Light Mysticism and practiced mainly by monks and nuns, which consists in the



unceasingly praying the "Jesus Prayer": "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful to me a sinner!". This is an oversimplification, but it is beyond the scope of the present work to explain the riches and depths of this spiritual way. To count the number of times they say this prayer (and the prescribed reverences and prostrations which accompany it in monastic practice), a sort of "rosary" is used consisting of a circle of knotted woolen or silken cord ending in a knotted cross and tassel, and a *Konbologion* or *Konboskion* by the Greeks and *Chotki* by the Slavs. The Byzantine Catholics have replaced this devotion, whereby the treasures of Oriental Mysticism are laid open to the layman, by the practice of the recitation of the Latin Dominican rosary. The Latin rosary is directed to the Blessed Mother, unlike the Byzantine form which is directed to Christ; this shift in emphasis was unnecessary, as well as untheological, for the Byzantine Rite already had great external and internal devotion to the Mother of God: Orientals prostrate themselves before her *ikon*, incense her *ikon* and pray before it in church or at home, her name is mentioned countless times in the Liturgy and Divine Office, and she is the object of para-liturgical devotions as we will see in the next section.

## 2. Other Popular Devotions

The Byzantine tradition knows as popular devotions the para-liturgical services of *Moleben*, *Akathistos* (Slavonic *Akafist*) and *Paraclisis*, all of which incorporate elements of the Divine Office and are somewhat analogous to the Latin Rite "Bible Vigils", and which may be directed to our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Mother of God, or to the Saints.

The Byzantine Catholics have largely substituted for these rich devotions drawn from liturgical sources. Latin rite services which are being called into question today even in the West: community recitation of the Dominican Rosary and Stations of the Cross, Benediction with the Most Blessed Sacrament, etc.

In regard to the latter, Benediction is redundant in the Byzantine Rite, for the priest blesses the congregation with the chalice containing the consecrated Species of Bread and Wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, towards the end of the Divine

Liturgy (Mass) after the Communion of the People before he transfers the remainder of the Eucharist to the Altar of Preparation (Proskomedia Table, Zertnik). Byzantine Catholics have introduced (as early as the XVIII century, it is true) a form of Benediction with the reserved Eucharist modeled on that of the Latin Rite. The Eucharistic Bread is placed in a ciborium with a jeweled crown attached to the upper lid, although some Slavs even use a thin square "Lamb" (Host) in a Latin Ostensorium. The hymns used for Benediction (called by the Slavs "Supplikatsia") are taken mostly from Byzantine liturgical sources. We might note here that the reserved Eucharist, according to the Byzantine tradition, is strictly for use in Communion of the Sick (and during the Great Lent for the Liturgy of the Presanctified), and not for Benediction or for Visits to the Blessed Sacrament; in fact, all reverences within the sanctuary are made to the absidial ikon (or to the altar, Gospel Book and Hand Cross) and not to the shrine containing the reserved Eucharist. This is not due to a lack of faith in the Real Presence but to a difference in emphasis as to its scope; at Communion time during the Divine Liturgy and when the Entrance Procession is made with the reserved Eucharist in the Liturgy of the Presanctified, the clergy and laity prostrate themselves before the "divine, holy, precious, immortal, heavenly, life-giving and awe-inspiring Mysteries of Christ" (Litany of Thanksgiving), the "Precious and holy Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Communion formula).

### C. Religious (Monastic) Life

The Byzantine Monastic tradition is without distinction between various Religious Orders and between Simple Vows and Solemn Vows of Monastic Profession.

The Byzantine religious are simply monks, or men and women dedicated to the monastic profession or class, without belonging to any particular Religious Order. Most monks and nuns follow the way of life dictated by St. Basil the Great and as adopted by the statutes (Typika) of their particular monastery. A very few follow the "Rule" of St. Anthony of the Desert. Each monastery

is independant but subject in certain matters to the Bishop or to the Patriarch (exempt "Stavropegial" monasteries).

In regard to the grades of Monastic Profession, let it suffice here to note that there are various grades or ranks of monks distinguished by the grade of *habit* they have been invested with and wear, to which certain degrees of obligations appertain, and not by their having Simple Temporary, Simple Perpetual, or Solemn Vows. The grades of the monastic garb and life are, in simplified fashion, as follows:

*Rasophore* (roughly analogous to the Latin Rite Postulant and Novice)—a beginner who has been received into a monastery a wears the Rason (Slavonic Rijasa), a long flowing black or dark-colored cassock with wide sleeves, and a black stove-pipe hat, the Kamilavkion. He may remain a rasophore indefinitely (however, usually 2 or 3 years) and may leave or be dismissed at any time.

*Mikroloskemnos*—a wearer of the "Little" or "Angelic" Habit which consists of a belted under-tunic, the Rason described above, and the stove-pipe hat with the addition of a long flowing black vestiture ceremony and has professed the monastic state by answering the pertinent ritual questions of the celebrant (usually the Abbot or Bishop) and may never leave. Most monks belong to this grade or rank.

*Megaloskemnos*—a wearer of the "Great" Habit which consists of the "Little" Habit with the addition of a special embroidered "scapular" (Paramand) which hangs down in front, and with the substitution of a soft conical hat, the Koukulion, for the cylindrical stove-pipe hat under the black veil. Red crosses and pious ejaculations are often embroidered on parts of the Great Habit. This highest grade of monastic life enjoins upon the monk a more rigorous austerity of life with greater silence and retirement from the world, so much so that it is most often given only to very old and saintly monks.

In addition to the basic monastic Habits described above, the Mikroskemnik and Megaloskemnik also wear the monastic flowing black mantle, the Mandyas, caught up at neck and foot, as well as the Byzantine "Rosary" (the Konvoskion or Cotki

described above) twined about their left wrist. All of these usages may vary according to localities.

The Byzantine Catholic Religious have mostly been reformed according to the style of life of the Latin Rite Mendicants and Canons Regular, particularly the Jesuits and Redemptorists. They have had their Religious Habit modified radically and no longer wear the hat and veil, the great sign of the religious state. They style themselves members of the O.S.B.M. (*Ordo Sancti Basilii Magni*) which does not, in fact, exist and are hierarchally organized according to the mode of the Latin Religious Institutes with Superior Generals and Provincials or their equivalent thus departing from the Byzantine tradition of independant monasteries. They officially regard the Latin juridical distinction of Simple and Solemn Profession as equivalent respectively to the grades of *Mikroskemnos* and *Megaloskemnos*, which we have seen above are not even widely analogous (a closer analogy would be that of a Benedictine monk who leaves his Order to join that of the Trappists or Camaldolese).

#### IV SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE ROLE OF THE FRANCISCANS IN THE FUTURE WITH REGARD TO THE BYZANTINE RITE

My first suggestion is a radical one: the Franciscans should withdraw as soon as possible from those apostolates among Oriental Christians where they are not prepared to respect and observe the ancient traditions of the Byzantine and other Eastern Rites. Since this is hardly feasible nor desirable given the close ties we have always had with the East and because of the dire need for spiritually dedicated Priests, Brothers, Sisters, and lay Tertiaries who will faithfully observe the Rite in these areas, may I make a few practical suggestions:

A. The Franciscans already engaged in these apostolates and territories might undertake a "crash-program" to orientalize themselves by studying the traditions of these Churches, especially as exemplified by their Orthodox or "Separated" Brethren, and scrupulously putting them into practice. Our liturgical models should be the Patirarchs and synods of the Orthodox Church.

B. The traditions of the Orientals should be sympathetically



described in our Seminaries and schools; the "Dies Orientalis" so often recommended by the Roman Pontiffs should be at least an annual event.

C. In countries which are traditionally of the Oriental Rite (e.g. the Holy Land, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, U.S.S.R., etc.) the Latin Rite should be placed in the background and every effort made to have the Oriental Rites more attractive. We need more and better prepared and observant franciscan of the Oriental Rites, especially in these places, but elsewhere too.

D. We should scrupulously avoid proselytism among the Orthodox. In fact we should begin with a mind-set of ourselves as Orthodox in full communion with the Apostolic See of Rome and thus avoid in ourselves the identity crisis of having to avoid the appearance of being "too Orthodox".

E. In this era when we have begun to realize that the Spirit of St. Francis and the Rule are more important by far than any particular precept of the rule, I would suggest that the friars of the Byzantine Rite should adapt themselves completely to the spirit and forms of the Byzantine religious life (which has many varieties) while keeping the spirit of St. Francis. To give a perhaps ridiculously obvious example, the Byzantine rite Franciscan friar would do better to observe the seasons and mode of fasting of the Byzantine Church rather than necessarily those prescribed by the Rule (and/or the General Constitutions).

## V CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this paper to examine the relationship between the Franciscans and Byzantine Catholicism both as to past accomplishments in this apostolate, and suggested endeavors for the future. In treating of the work of the Franciscans in the past with regard to the Byzantine Rite, it has been found necessary to point out where Byzantine Catholics have departed from the ancient traditions of the Church of Constantinople, and to suggest the steps that might be taken by the followers of St. Francis to ameliorate some of the unfortunate situations which have arisen.

While treating of the latinizations and deviations which have crept into the usages of Byzantine Catholics, I have had to "tell it

like it is" or at least as I have seen in it my experiences in the U.S.A., Italy, Jugoslavia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Russia and the Ukraine, Greece, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordon, and Israel. Perhaps it has been most unfair to lump together all Byzantine Catholics and not to distinguish more carefully between the different nations and peoples who use this Rite. Again, there have been attempts at reform among various groups of Byzantine Catholics. In a paper of this scope, however, it has been impossible to make fine distinctions nor to record every trend. My purpose has been more to goad the consciences of those who have departed from Byzantine tradition or who are perpetuating such abuses by ignoring or minimizing them. The fact is that these "minhtuiae" of rite and custom are of exceeding importance to our Separated Brethren and constitute a rightful scandal and sumbling block to re-union as they fear latinization too.

In a work of this kind it has always been more facile to criticize than to praise. However, I would be most simplistic and even unjust if I did not point out two items: 1) given the fact that the Byzantine Catholics have lived as island cultures amidst a sea of Latins, and were closely controlled by Latin authorities, one may marvel that they did not become more latinized than they are; 2) in this era of ecumenical camaraderie and heightened attempts at a reapproachment with the Marxists, we tend to forget or at least find it inconvenient to remember how much of the blood and tears of our Byzantine Catholics have been spilled when they have been persecuted for their faithful adherence to the Roman See and the Christian Religion. For too long have they found themselves in the position of being treated as traitors by the Orthodox and interesting, if not actually annoying, anachronisms and misfits by the Latins; I have suggested that this situation could be changed by more education and interest on the part of the Latins and greater fidelity to Byzantine traditions on the part of the Byzantine Catholics. Because of their peculiar spirit, 700 year old ties with the Christian East, and their actual engagement in this apostolate, it is my opinion that the Franciscans may yet have a glorious part to play for the Byzantine Church in particular and for the Basilea in General, remembering the ancient motto of the Byzantines, blasoned even today on church,

vestment, ornament, and even the Lamb (Host) itself: "Jesus Christ is Victorious!"

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# THE PROBLEM OF ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY AND THE CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

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## Introduction

When John Cardinal Wright presented the 1964 McGeary Foundation Lecture on the topic "Conscience and Authority," he overcame the problem of a topic too complex for adequate treatment in a single lecture by couching his remarks in the framework of a proposed book, indicating what areas would evidently have to be treated to do justice to the matter at hand.<sup>1</sup> The question of conscience and authority represents only one small area of the topic I have been asked to treat, "The Problem of Ecclesiastical Authority and the Concepts of Freedom and Democracy". Lacking both the cleverness and the intellectual equipment of Cardinal Wright, I shall simply have to muddle through as best I can in the form of this paper.

After suggesting an approach to the problem by way of considering the initial modern confrontation of ecclesiastical authority with the concepts of freedom and democracy outside the Church proper, we will then take up what I feel is the outstanding contemporary problematic, the question of freedom and democracy *within* the Church.

Needless to say, it will not be possible to consider all aspects of the problem. In particular I would like to exclude from this discussion the particular question of freedom in the area of theological investigation, which I'm sure Father Killian will treat later this morning in his presentation. Likewise it is not possible to do little more than allude to the complex problem of freedom of conscience and the magisterium. For an interesting presentation of this topic I would recommend the lecture of Cardinal Wright, which appeared in the April-May, 1964, issue of *Critic*.

## The Church and the Democratic State

The first modern confrontation of ecclesiastical authority with the concept of democracy came in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Once the dust of the Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic era began to settle, the question arose whether the democratic principles of government espoused by the Revolution were compatible with the Catholic faith.

Two camps were quickly formed. The one school, which came to be known as the "Liberal Catholic" school, was represented by men such as Lamennais, Montalembert, and Dupanloup, who believed that separation of Church and State in a democratic society was a legitimate possibility. Opposing them were the so-called "Ultramontanes," who claimed that democratic principles were dangerous and posed a definite threat to the existence of the Catholic Church.

Ecclesiastical authorities in Rome did not rush to become involved in the controversy, but when a judgment was inevitable the judgment fell clearly in favor of the Ultramontanes. Thus we find among the condemned propositions compiled by Pius IX into the *Syllabus of Errors* one that reads, "The Church should be separated from the State, and the State from the Church."<sup>2</sup> Leo XIII, however, took a more systematic approach to the problem, and developed a series of encyclicals dealing with the nature of the Church, the nature of the State, and the rights and duties of citizens.<sup>3</sup> Although Leo did not substantially alter the views of Pius on the primacy of the Church, he did recognize the State as a perfect society, and acknowledged that there was no one form of government which alone was compatible with the preservation of the rights of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

As the 20th century developed a new threat faced the Church; the rise of totalitarian states which denied the basic liberties of the human person. Faced with this situation, the official voice of the Church responded by placing strong emphasis on human liberty, and subsequently arrived at the recognition that democracy was not only compatible but seemed the most advantageous to the preservation of human liberty. This trend began to develop in the later writings of Pius XI, came on strong in the early years

of Pius XII, and reached a climax with the explicit extolling of democracy by the Pope in his 1944 Christmas message.<sup>5</sup>

If we reexamine these facts we discover a definite pattern of development. Initially the concept of democracy came to the attention of the Church as part of a liberalist movement flowing from the French Revolution which advocated, along with its promotion of democracy, many tenets totally unacceptable to the life and freedom of the Church. It is significant to note that the democratic form of government adopted in the late 18th century in our own country passed with virtually no notice from the Vatican. But faced with the total liberal package, the Church at first was unable to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate ideas which it contained, and as a result the movement as a whole, including the concept of democracy as a political form, was rejected. By the time of Leo XIII, the Church was able to look more clearly at the concept of democracy in itself, and the official attitude changed to one of acceptance. Finally, faced with the threatening alternative of totalitarianism, the Church authorities positively advocated the form of government which now seemed most conducive to assure her freedom and prosperity. Today the problem which faces the Church vis-a-vis civil society takes on a new two-fold form: 1) to enter into dialogue with totalitarian and atheistic forms of government in the hope of better understanding the good contained in them and also in the hope of influencing their historical development for the good, a task suggested by Pope John in *Pacem in Terris*;<sup>6</sup> and 2) to discover how best the Church can exert her moral leadership in the world to promote principles of peace and justice among men.

### The Church and Religious Liberty

The path taken by the Church's modern confrontation with the concept of liberty bears striking resemblance to the confrontation with democracy, specifically as regards the question of *religious* liberty. Once again the origin of the problematic came with the rise of European liberalism. Gregory XVI first came to grips with this problem in his encyclical *Mirari Vos* in 1832, where he strongly condemned the liberal tenet that favored freedom of conscience, calling it "insanity" to say that

"liberty of conscience must be claimed and defended for anyone."<sup>7</sup> Pius IX reiterated the condemnation of Gregory, again making no distinction between a view of religious liberty dependent upon the presuppositions of Liberalist philosophy and such constitutional forms of religious liberty as that written into the American Constitution.<sup>8</sup>

Leo XIII, as we have seen, took a more systematic approach to the problem of Church, State, and Liberty. But on the question of religious liberty, he does little more than echo the teaching of earlier Popes, although he does acknowledge that the State, for the sake of avoiding a greater evil or preserving some greater good, may tolerate what is at variance with truth and justice, but only so long as no explicit right is granted to anything that is not true and honest.<sup>9</sup> This statement indicates the basic question which Leo took as his starting point, namely, 'Does error have rights?' Faced with this question, the only possible answer was 'no'.

The same question that provided Leo with his starting point perdured as the fundamental question down to our own decade. But the pontificates of Pius XI and Pius XII provided the groundwork for a new understanding of religious liberty. Pius XI, faced with the rise of totalitarianism, turned his attention repeatedly to a consideration of the liberties of man, and among the liberties upon which he insisted was liberty of consciences and the right of the believer to practice his religion.<sup>10</sup> The context in which Pius XI promoted this liberty was always the case of the liberty of Catholics, but inevitably this led to a further inquiry why this same right should not be regarded as fundamental to all men.

Pius XII further lays the groundwork for the subsequent development in the area of religious freedom by his consistent emphasis on the basic dignity of man and his right to follow the dictates of his conscience, although again this latter concept is only explicitly applied to Catholics. Neither Pius XI nor Pius XII could find a justification for the universal right of religious liberty because they were still operating out of the framework of the question of the rights of error. The first to suggest the groundwork for a new starting point in an official magisterial document was John XXIII, who in *Pacem in Terris* classes reli-



religious liberty as one of the basic human rights flowing from the nature of the human person. "This too must be listed among the rights of a human being," Pope John says, "to honor God according to the sincere dictates of his own conscience."<sup>11</sup>

A concept of religious freedom taking the basic dignity of the human person as its starting point is fully developed by the Council in its *Declaration on Religious Freedom*. The right, as the Council envisions it, demands both that one be free from any coercion to practice a religion that is contrary to his conscience and that he not be restrained from practicing what is in accord with his conscience. It is the role of the state to "help create conditions favorable to the fostering of religious life in order that the people may be truly enabled to exercise their religious rights and to fulfill their religious duties."<sup>12</sup> This right is not based upon the objective truth of a man's faith, nor even upon his subjective good dispositions, but simply upon his basic dignity as a man.

Just as was the case with the question of democracy, the original problem of religious liberty arose out of a context within which the basic question could not be distinguished from the total problem which liberalism presented. The systematic study of the basic notion of human freedom and the nature of the Church did not in this case yield an immediate resolution of the basic problem because of the unfortunate question taken as the starting point, but inevitably it did lead to a reformulation of the basic question which then yielded the contemporary solution to the problem of religious liberty, and enables the Church now to move into a period of positive growth in ecumenical understanding and cooperation.

We have considered these two examples of a freedom-democracy-authority problem because they suggest the necessary precondition for a positive resolution of the pressing contemporary question of freedom *within* the Church. This precondition is that we begin with a positive understanding of the nature of ecclesiastical authority and the nature of Christian freedom and use these as a fixed point in relation to which we can measure the present tensions within the Church and hope to come to creative solutions. The theoretic solution to the question of democracy and the question of religious liberty came only after the fact of

democracy and religious freedom was a *fait-accompl*i throughout much of the world. As Bernard Lonergan remarks somewhere, theology usually arrives on the scene "a little breathless and a little late."<sup>13</sup> Hopefully, in this case, theology may be able to arrive in time to contribute something towards the resolution of some of the grave tensions which tend, if unresolved, to pass quickly beyond the level of normal and healthy tension and erupt into cancerous growths that could slowly eat away at the life of the Church. So let us now turn our attention to the basic Christian concepts of ecclesiastical authority and freedom as we find them in Scripture and in the living Tradition of the Church.

### The Concept of Authority in the Church

The notion of ecclesiastical authority, if it is a truly Christian notion, must be solidly grounded in the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church; if it is not, then our problem is a non-problem, for there would be no such thing as genuine ecclesiastical authority to create tension with the concepts of freedom and democracy. This is the view of those who say that the Church is a community of love, a community of faith, but nothing more, who deny any such thing as true hierarchy and true authority in the Church.

Can we look to the New Testament and find there a solid basis for the fact of authority in the Church? The Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Church* indicates the Scriptural roots of this fact.

The Lord Jesus, after praying to the Father and calling to himself those whom he desired, appointed twelve men who would stay in his company, and whom he would send to preach the kingdom of God. (c.f. Mark 3: 13-19; Mt. 10: 1-42) These apostles (c.f. Luke 6:13) he formed after the manner of a college or a fixed group, over which he placed Peter, chosen from among them (c.f. John 21: 15-17). He sent them first to the children of Israel and then to all nations (c.f. Rom. 1:16), so that as sharers in his power they might make all peoples his disciples, sanctifying and governing them (c.f. Mt. 28: 16-20; Mk. 16:15; Luke 24: 45-48; John 20: 21-23). Thus they would spread his Church, and by ministering to it under the guidance of the Lord, would shepherd

it all days even to the consummation of the world (c.f. Mt. 28:20).

They were confirmed fully in this mission on the day of Pentecost (c.f. Acts 2: 1-26) in accordance with the Lord's promise: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) By everywhere preaching the gospel (c.f. Mark 16:20), which was accepted by their hearers under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the apostles gathered together the universal Church, which the Lord established on the apostles and built upon Blessed Peter, their chief, Christ himself remaining the supreme cornerstone (c.f. Apoc. 21:14; Mt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20).<sup>14</sup>

The *Acts of the Apostles* and the New Testament epistles confirm the fact that true authority was understood to exist in the apostolic community. This is most clearly seen in Acts 15. A great dispute had arisen in the Church whether it was necessary for Gentile converts after baptism to submit to circumcision and follow the Mosaic law. The apostles come together in Jerusalem to take up this pressing question, and after hearing all sides of the case, they present their decision, prefacing their remarks with the striking phrase, "The Holy Spirit and We have decided" (Acts 15:28).

Thus we see that both in the teaching of Jesus and in the practice of the apostolic Church there is an understanding of true authority in the community. This authority is exercised in a special way by the apostles, and among the apostles in a special way by Peter. It was to Peter that Christ had given the name "Rock" and said that he would found his Church upon that rock (Mt. 16:18). At the Last Supper Christ prayed especially for Peter that his strength would not fail and that he might strengthen the others (Luke 22:31-32), and after the Resurrection he gave to Peter the special commission to "feed my lambs, feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). After the Ascension Peter clearly exercises a primacy of leadership among the apostles. He supervises the election of a successor to Judas (Acts 1:15-26), preaches on behalf of all on Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40), and defends the right of all to preach the gospel even against the wishes of men (Acts 4:19).

The authority of the apostles and the special authority of Peter, as John L. McKenzie points out in his book *Authority in the Church*, is rooted in the special *ministry* they receive from Jesus, the two-fold ministry of Word and Sacrament.<sup>15</sup> It is in this context too that the Council in the passage we have quoted views the authority of the apostles. Authority in the Church is an outgrowth of the basic ministry of the gospel entrusted to Peter and the apostles as shepherds and leaders of the Church which Jesus founded.

How did the notion of authority develop in the Tradition of the Church? Yves Congar, in *Power and Poverty in the Church*, has concisely summarized the development of this notion through the centuries.<sup>16</sup> Immediately following apostolic times, Congar says, the notion of authority combines three characteristic features: 1) a strong insistence upon authority; 2) a very close link with the Christian community; and 3) a marked charismatic or spiritual character. Especially representative of this period are the writings of St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Cyprian. The bishop is seen as a strong and central figure in the Church, but at the same time it is recognized that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, essential for a truly Christian community, may be found among all members of the Church. Thus, bishops and people must work together in the closest harmony. Congar cites the words of Cyprian, "I have made it a rule, ever since the beginning of my episcopate, to make no decision merely on the strength of my own personal opinion without consulting you (the priests and the deacons), without the approbation of the people."<sup>17</sup>

After the time of Constantine, when the Church emerged from its "underground" status, the bishop becomes a recognized public figure, endowed with marks and titles of dignity. Nevertheless, the basically spiritual nature of the office was vigorously maintained, and often the bishops were chosen from the saintliest ranks of a growing monasticism. The episcopacy was still seen primarily as an office of service arising from the needs of the whole community, and the bishop clearly recognized himself as one of the faithful, like Augustine in his famous phrase, "*Vobis sum episcopus; vobiscum Christianus.*"<sup>18</sup>

In the Middle Ages, however, a strongly secular character



infiltrated the notion of authority in the Church. Gregory VII spearheaded the movement to ascribe to the episcopate and especially to the papacy dominion over civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs. A strongly hierarchical notion of the Church emerged, and great emphasis was placed upon law and power. This shift did not take place without vigorous reaction. Characteristic of this reaction are the words of St. Bernard to Pope Eugenius III, "You allow yourself to be overburdened with decisions you have to give in all kinds of external and secular cases. As far as you are concerned, I hear of nothing but awards and 'laws'. All this, as well as claims to prestige and riches, goes back to Constantine, not to Peter."<sup>19</sup> The anti-ecclesial movements of the 12th century and later the Spiritualist movement in our own Order also fed upon an over-secularized and over-legalized notion of authority in the Church.

These movements climaxed in the explosion of the Reformation. The Church reacted, Congar says, in two characteristic ways: 1) she reasserted her authority and gave it a greater degree of centralization; and 2) she revised the idea and the practice of authority on the moral and pastoral plane.<sup>20</sup> Thus, while many of the scandalous abuses that characterized the Middle Ages dissolved, authority remained strong and isolated from the people, and to a large degree the Pope and his Curia became synonymous with "The Church."

In our own century, finally, a strong movement has developed to return to the biblical and patristic sources of the notion of ecclesiastical authority, and this movement was crowned with official approbation in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, most notably in the *Constitution on the Church* and the *Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church*.

This historical sketch should illustrate how vital it is to the fidelity and well-being of the Church that our notion of ecclesiastical authority be one that is true to the authentic sources of our faith. What are the characteristics, the qualities of such an authority that can truly be called "Christian?" I would suggest a number of such characteristics or qualities:

1) On the negative side, ecclesiastical authority *must never be confused with authoritarianism*, a master to slave relationship.

"You know that among the pagans," Jesus said, "their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you" (Mark 10:42). Again, St. Peter writes: "Be shepherds of the flock of God that is entrusted to you. Watch over it, not simply as a duty, but gladly because God wants it; not for sordid money, but because you are eager to do it. Never be a dictator over any group that is put into your charge, but be an example that the whole flock can follow" (1 Peter 5:3). In the light of this we can feel the sting of Bernard's remark to Eugene that he was exercising the authority of Constantine and not that of Peter. The analogy for the Christian in authority is not the soldier nor the policeman, but the shepherd.

2) Authority in the Church is *based upon ministry or service*. After warning the apostles not to lord it over others, Jesus goes on, "No, anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45). This is the example Jesus gave when he got down on his knees and washed the feet of the apostles at the Last Supper (John 13:1-15). This is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself a slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could" (1 Cor. 9:19). And again, "It is not ourselves that we are preaching, but Christ Jesus as the Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

3) The special type of service that is characteristic of Christian authority must be a *service based on love*. In the parable of the Good Shepherd Jesus contrasts the hired hand, who serves for the sake of pay, with himself and his followers, who are to be shepherds who serve because they care about the sheep (John 10:1-18). The one who exercises authority in the Church must not look upon his position as that of an administrator only, one who performs a function without which the Church cannot run smoothly. Unless he is really a pastor, one who loves the people he serves, one who is willing to give his life for them (we don't

have to die to give our lives for others!), then he is not a *Christian* servant.

4) Authority in the Church is *not to be exercised through coercion, but through leadership*.<sup>21</sup> When so many of his followers were abandoning him after his discourse on the Eucharist, Jesus did not command or threaten his apostles to make them stay; he offered them a choice in freedom, "Will you also go away?" (John 6:57). Above all else the Christian must rule by his example, so that he can say with St. Paul, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). This is not to deny a true power to command that is part of Christian authority, for both Christ and St. Paul gave very explicit commands at times. But the *primary* mode of exercising authority is true leadership, a leadership that demands that the leader be one who is present to his people, not shut off or aloof from them. Like Jesus, he must be *in the midst of them* as one who serves (c.f. Luke 22:27).

5) A fifth characteristic of authority in the Scriptures and Christian Tradition is that it is *never beyond criticism*. The classic example of this is Paul's confrontation of Peter on the question of the Jewish prohibition to eat with the Gentiles. When Peter refused to eat with the Gentiles out of human respect for the opinion of the 'Judaizers,' Paul reproached Peter for his conduct "in front of everyone" (c.f. Gal. 2:11-14). This tone is present throughout the New Testament; those in authority are to be respected for the office they hold, even those who are unworthy of the trust (c.f. Acts 23:5), but at the same time they are never to be considered beyond the scope of legitimate criticism when this is for the good of the community. And there is no indication that Peter ever held it against Paul that he spoke his mind. Criticism of authority certainly creates a tension, but as long as the criticism is made justly and in a spirit of love for the good of the community the tension that results is a healthy sign of life and progress.

6) A final characteristic of authority in the Church is that the authority *does not exist in rigidly pre-established structures*. Rather, structures emerge and change according to the needs and concrete circumstances of the Church at a given time.<sup>22</sup> A good example of this is the institution of the diaconate in the

apostolic Church (c.f. Acts 6). It is only in the Middle Ages and after, when the biblical and patristic notion of authority has been largely transformed according to secular patterns, that authority becomes more identified with the structures than with the pastoral ministry of the one who is ordained to serve the community. The basic ministry which Christ gave to the apostles was that of preaching the gospel and being ministers of the sacraments. Because authority is necessary to fulfill this mission, true authority is very much a part of their role. But the structures within which they exercise this authority must be flexible and must always be subject to the criterion of what best serves the ministry of the gospel which has been entrusted to them.

### The Concept of Freedom in the Church

The second concept we are to consider is the concept of "freedom." On the level of everyday speech the word freedom means many different things to many different people. Freedom to the schoolchild or the tired professor may mean the end of the scholastic year; to the prisoner it may mean the whole outside world that he can read about and dream about but not be part of; to the oppressed Negro freedom may mean the opportunity to live where he wants, to get the job for which he is qualified. To the hen-pecked husband freedom might be the long-awaited business trip; to the old man suffering in the hospital, freedom could mean death.

On a more refined level, Bernard Häring distinguishes several notions of freedom from a Christian notion. For the anarchist, he says, freedom means the absence of any order which might restrict his instincts and passions; the classical "liberal" sees in freedom the absence of any truth that is considered absolute and binding on all; the Marxist sees freedom in the elimination of all class distinctions that differentiate one group of men from another.<sup>23</sup>

Karl Rahner, in his article "The Theology of Freedom,"<sup>24</sup> suggests a notion of freedom which he believes is the real Christian notion. He sees true liberty as freedom from any restraint that keeps one from being fully himself. This is not primarily freedom of *actions*—a type of freedom which can easily de-



generate into license—but rather a fundamental *freedom of being*.

This, I would suggest, corresponds fully with the biblical notion of freedom. The paramount 'freedom story' of the Old Testament is the story of the deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land, to a freedom which enables them to *be* what they are called to be—the People of God. In the same way, Christian freedom as St. Paul views it is freedom from sin and freedom from the bonds of the Law—in order to be free to *be* what we are called to be, adopted Sons of God in the Church, the new People of God (c.f. Gal. 4).

Christian freedom is at the very core of our being; it stems from the inner possession of the Truth. "You will learn the truth," Jesus says, "and the Truth will make you free" (John 8:32). Christian freedom results from the inner presence of the Spirit of God. "Now this Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17).

The Christian notion of freedom is well expressed in a statement of the "Right in the Church" symposium of the Canon Law society of America, held in October, 1968.

The Christian is one to whom the external restraint of law is secondary because he possesses within himself in faith the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit of freedom. Man's freedom is the very autonomy of God. The Christian living a moral life is not acquiring the Spirit by such a life but is expressing the fruit of possessing God's free gift of the Spirit. The observance of law does not constitute a man a child of God, but obedience to the unique "Law of Christ," the law of love, gives expression to the newness of Christian existence. The Christian acts as a Christian, that is as a 'new man,' only when love speaks through him in the community of men.

Radical Christian freedom is total freedom, but it is not absolute freedom. . . . The Christian community mediates to man the revealed model of love in action that is the person of Jesus Christ. And because the Christian community is the Body of Christ, the presence of Christ in the world, it has the right and duty to discern the forms that love takes in human society. . . . But the law of the Christian community will never be more than the necessary ex-

pression of inner Christian freedom in society in the changing patterns of times and cultures.<sup>25</sup>

From this we can derive some basic characteristics of Christian freedom:

1) Christian freedom implies learning from the Revelation of Jesus Christ the law of love which the Christian must live in the community of the Church. In learning this, the Christian learns *how* he can be most fully himself.

2) The responsibility to conform to the law of love rests primarily with the individual himself, although the individual does look to those in authority and to positive law to help him understand the calling of love in his own life. But the basic responsibility is his, and the fulfillment of it cannot be imposed from without by restraint. On this point it might be good to cite the words of the American Bishops' statement of 1960:

It must be emphasized, especially in these times, that the freedom innate in man as well as the social nature he enjoys, demands as a correlative the fullest personal responsibility. "Therefore every one of us will render an account for himself to God." (Rom. 14:12) The marvellous achievement of the human mind, conquering space and making each man a neighbor of every other human being on earth, gives urgency to this two-fold need: to maintain one's freedom by using it in accord with the limits and norms of rightful authority; to use it also according to his social nature and the needs of his fellowman. "For you have been called to liberty, brethren; only do not use liberty as an occasion for sensuality but by charity serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Gal. 5: 13-14)<sup>26</sup>

3) Because Christian freedom is radically rooted in the basic Christian calling, it is a freedom in which all members of the Church share equally, a freedom to be a religious subject with personal responsibility. To say that some Christians, e.g., those in authority, are more free than others would be to say that they are more Christian than others, that Christ more fully liberated them by baptism than he liberated the others.<sup>27</sup>

4) The Christian can never view his own freedom as something which exists in isolation from others, because in the Church

we are called to freedom in community with others. "Whenever we stay alone," Fransen writes, "whenever we separate ourselves from our brethren, we allow our freedom to be mutilated, our conscience to be obscured."<sup>28</sup> It is when we fail to recognize this basic communal reality that our freedom deteriorates into license, that men become unable to trust one another, and subsequently that freedom is overshadowed by fear. We have experienced this reality on a secular plane when demands for legitimate freedom in the ghetto or on the campus have deteriorated into unchecked rioting. And certainly the failure of authority to exercise its role responsibly is a contributory factor in the breakdown of communal concern among those who feel deprived of their just freedom.

5) Finally, freedom always demands the possibility of rejection and rebellion.<sup>29</sup> This is a biblical truth present from the Garden of Paradise to the Garden of Gethsemani. One does not *have to* rebel to prove he is free, but if one *cannot* rebel, if he is totally coerced, then he cannot be free.

### The Concept of Democracy

Unlike the concepts of authority and freedom, which are concepts with a Christian origin in Scripture and tradition, the concept of democracy is basically a political notion concerned with a form of government which seeks through the maximum participation of all citizens in the processes of government to strike a fine balance between the good of the person and the good of the community. By analogy with the political situation we can consider this concept in relation to authority in the Church. Since the concept itself is a familiar one, it will not be necessary to consider it in detail before moving into our consideration of the contemporary problematic with which we are concerned.

### The Contemporary Problematic: Freedom within the Church

Like the questions of democratic government and religious liberty vis-a-vis ecclesiastical authority, the question of freedom within the Church as it is voiced today stems back to a development in which the question was enmeshed in a whole system, in

this case the Modernist philosophy, which the Church found unacceptable. And as was true in the other cases, the initial response was an undifferentiated rejection. Pius X mustered all the authority of his office to seal the doom of Modernism, and in the aftermath there was a strong official suspicion of any demands for increased freedom within the Church. But the idea that a strongly centralized and unduly hierarchical Church structure was not totally in harmony with the liberty of the Children of God was still in the wind, and when Pope John opened up the window to let in some fresh air he discovered that soon a gale was blowing.

The Council attempted to face the issues which were being raised. She clearly affirmed the right of religious liberty, as we have seen. She reemphasized the so-called "horizontal" concept of the Church as the People of God, stressed the collegiality of the bishops in union with the Pope, and reasserted the legitimate importance of the laity in the life of the Church and the fact that the charismatic Spirit 'blows where he will'. The Council gave the go-ahead to much needed liturgical reform that would seek to reestablish the liturgy as the living worship of the whole Christian people. She attempted to come to grips with the role of the Church in the modern world, and later Pope Paul appeared before the leaders of the world at the United Nations to bear witness to the Church as a servant in the world, and to plead for peace and social justice.

Yet after the Council the fires of discontent seemed to burn ever more brightly. People began to complain that after the bishops returned home from the Council little had really changed, that the Church still projected the image of an authoritarian monolith, insensitive to the basic dignity, freedom, and needs of her people. Impatient with the pace of change, some Catholics, priests and laymen alike, began to operate outside the structure. Ecumenical endeavors far exceeded universal and diocesan norms; experimental liturgies went "underground"; bishops found themselves picketed by their own people in protest of their alleged slowness to come to grips with necessary social reform or religious renewal. Priests and sisters began to announce publicly their plans to leave their dioceses or communities, often to marry or even to



leave the Church completely. If any doubt remained that tension between authority and freedom in the Church was at a high water mark, the storm that followed the promulgation of *Humanae Vitae* should have made it clear that even the highest Church authority could no longer expect unquestioning submission to its pronouncements.

It would be simplistic to assume that every time voices are raised in protest there is a legitimate grievance that is being justly presented. But it would be equally simplistic to say that such serious and widespread protest as we have experienced could arise without any just basis. The question for us then is: how can we determine what are the real defects in the authority structures of the Church which need to be changed and how can we change them; and on the other hand to what extent do some of the demands for change represent a false notion of liberty and how can this be curbed?

As a framework within which to ask these questions, I would suggest three characteristics which Congar says exemplify the whole style of the evangelical Church: community (*koinonia*), service (*diakonia*), and witness (*marturia*).<sup>30</sup> These three concepts provide a meeting place for the concepts of freedom and democracy with ecclesiastical authority and provide a field in which we can hopefully gain a clearer insight into the contemporary problematic and the possible directions of a solution.

## Community

We have seen how the very existence of ecclesiastical authority emerged from the nature of the Church community Jesus had founded. We have also seen that the liberty of a Christian is a communal as well as an individual reality. On this basis the Church can be spoken of as a hierarchical and a horizontal reality; hierarchical in the sense that Christ founded it upon the college of bishops, with Peter as their chief; horizontal in that all members of the Church share equally in the basic Christian freedom communicated to us in our baptism. But in the medieval and post-Tridentine Church, the hierarchic elements so dominated in the Church that often the Church came to be identified simply with the structure rather than the basic ecclesial reality of the

*koinonia*, the Christian community. The Council, attempting to restore the balance between the hierarchical and the horizontal dimensions of the Church, certainly whetted the appetite of many in the Church for the heritage of liberty and participation that was their Christian birthrite. The problem has been that since the Council implementation of this theory has been slow in coming, and this is a basic cause of discontent in the Church today.

This has been true on many levels. Episcopal conferences have been formed, but still too many of their decisions must be sent to Rome for approval. A good example of this is the limited power even of a National Bishops' Conference over the liturgical life of their people. Yet history demonstrates that a vital and viable liturgy can only arise from the spirit of the people, not by imposition from above.<sup>31</sup> On the diocesan level Priests' Senates and Diocesan Synods seem often to be nothing but a rubber stamp for the bishop, with no real representative voice on behalf of the people. The same has been true often of Parish Councils, especially where the majority of the members are appointed by the pastor. On the other hand, those in authority can rightly point out that in many cases most of their people are either not sufficiently qualified or not sufficiently interested to take part in the running of a parish, much less of a diocese. Where this is true the authorities may rightly move slowly in immediate implementation of broad-based representation, but at the same time they must move immediately to provide the needed education and to positively promote a true Christian understanding of the place of the laity in the Church. As Bernard Häring points out, a primary task of authority in the Church is to lead people to the recognition and exercise of their responsibility as free members of a free Church.<sup>32</sup>

The Church can never be a totally democratic organization in the sense that a political society can be democratic, for the Church is by her very nature hierarchical, and authority in the Church springs from the two-fold mission of Word and Sacrament which Christ entrusted to the apostles and to the successors ordained by them to carry on their mission. But the voice of the Spirit, as the Council reaffirmed, is heard not only through the hierarchy but through all members of the Church. If this is

asserted in theory, but no provision is made in the structure of the Church to assure that the voice of the laity will be heard, then the theory has become a dead letter. A structure that does not provide for this, especially in modern circumstances, does not correspond to a really Traditional Christian concept of community. This is the main burden of Orsey's recent article on constitutional law in the Church, where he explains that

democracy in the Church cannot mean political democracy in the ordinary sense, since the power of jurisdiction, that is of government, is inalterably in the episcopate, given to them by the Holy Spirit in their consecration. But democracy can mean a social structure in which the contribution from the whole people of God, from every person, toward good government by the bishops is assured. Such contribution is always an essential need since the bishops do not have the fullness of all gifts given to the Church. They cannot govern *well* without using all resources available. Today their need is even greater; in many fields they are not specialists, hence unable to make a good decision without specialized advice.<sup>33</sup>

At present Church law is in a process of reform. It is to be hoped that the reform will be a comprehensive one that takes into account this need to assure that the voice of the people be heard. We have seen that Jesus did not establish particular structures within which the hierarchical and horizontal nature of the Christian community was to be realized. The structure of the Church needs to be flexible and capable of adaptation according to local circumstances and the needs of the times. On the theological level, the eschatological nature of the Church, the "pilgrim people" as the Council calls it, demands that any structures that the Church establishes be provisional and subject to adaptation and change. If the reform of Church law is done according to contemporary needs, without the necessary provision for continual restructuring and change, the result may stem the tide of protest temporarily but will have sown the seeds of future discontent and will still represent a basic infidelity to the biblical notion of authority in the Church.<sup>34</sup>

### Service

Our second characteristic of life in the Church is service. This

notion, as we have seen, rules out any authoritarian form or use of government in the Church which merits Jesus' condemnation of "lording it over" the people. The moral base of authority in the Church is not power, but love. The church is a community of love, and authority in the Church is leadership in love, typified by Christ's parable of the Good Shepherd. The primary purpose of authority in the Church is not to impose restraint, but rather to point the way to a correct implementation of the personal responsibility that flows from the calling in freedom which has made us members of the Christian community. This is why we said that a primary duty of those in authority is to educate the people to live in liberty. This also explains why the the freedom to rebel insofar as this may involve a sincere, or Church must never rule by coercion, but must always recognize even a culpable rejection of the faith—a basic conclusion of the religious liberty question.

On this particular point of service I would suggest three particular areas where reform on the part of the Church authorities may better assure the legitimate freedom the Christian people enjoy:

1) There must be a marked shift away from the strongly juridic mentality which has been the groundwork not only of Church law but of moral theology. Much of this may be attributed to the concrete circumstances of the Middle Ages, in which secular and ecclesiastical authority were too closely united. Today we must recognize again that the Church is a voluntary society whose members belong freely, and that the primary *raison d'être* of Church law is the legitimate promotion of the pastoral mission of the Church, the mission of Word and Sacrament, which ultimately seeks to lead (not force or threaten) men to follow the fundamental Christian law of love as mature adult Christians who must give an account to God for their actions. Much more could be said about this, but as I pointed out at the beginning the many dimensions of the problem of freedom of conscience simply had to be considered beyond the scope of this talk.

2) There must be implementation of the fact that the service in love which is Christian authority demands communication and



contact between those in authority and those they serve. Number 16 of the Council's *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops* stresses this point. Unfortunately, the bishop is very often greatly limited in his ability to know his people by the size of his diocese. The possibility of more bishops and smaller dioceses, with inter-diocesan cooperation in areas of seminary education, charitable institutions and the like should certainly be considered. There is much less excuse for the fact that too many parish priests prefer the security of the rectory to venturing forth among the people. But unless the priests make the effort to know their people, the sense of alienation that threatens to drive many for the organized Church will continue. If we grant the long accepted principle that love presupposes knowledge, then personal knowledge of one's flock is an undeniable presupposition of a Christian pastoral service in love.

3) The Church must honestly face the question of her material wealth and the question of titles and honors which tends to separate the hierarchy from the people.<sup>35</sup> Significant first steps have already been taken in this direction. The problem, of course, is more pressing and more urgent in the poorer countries of the world than it is in our own, but even here one may legitimately question the proportion of Church finances that go into building and maintenance in relation to the amount of her resources used to help her poorer members—the very need which gave rise to the diaconate in the early Church. Pope Paul at the United Nations called attention to his own littleness and powerlessness in the midst of these representatives of all the nations of the world, but at times the Church in particular places does not project this same image. Only a Church that is a sign of poverty, that is lacking all ambition for worldly honor, can really be the Church of Jesus Christ, whose rulers stand in the midst of the people as those who serve.

## Witness

The final concept is that of *marturia* or witness. We have mentioned before that witness, the witness of the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, is the basic mission of the Church from which all her authority flows.

The fundamental tension here results from the fact that in order to implement this commission to witness the Church must legislate. We have seen that from the very beginning a true authority with the power to direct and govern was acknowledged in the Church, and those who would do away with *all* law in the Church would destroy the foundations of the Church, for the law is necessary as long as the Church has not yet reached the final perfection of the parousia as a guide to help her people most fully realize their vocation to be true to their very being as free men. And at times the law is necessarily going to impose restrictions upon individual men by pointing out to them the way to harmonize their own freedom with the good of the whole community; for Christian freedom, as we have seen, is a communal as well as an individual reality.

The prophetic gift of certain individuals must be allowed to find expression within the Church, and these must not be denied according to the whim of those in authority. But at the same time, as Rahner emphasizes, those possessed of the charisms must also recognize the authentic role of authority and operate in communion with the hierarchy.<sup>36</sup> The tension that has been created especially with regard to the participation of priests and religious in social protest movements bears witness to the problems that can arise in this area. It is not possible here to outline solutions to concrete problems, but merely to indicate that in the concrete situations those in authority must acknowledge and respect the freedom of the Church's individual members to be true to their prophetic calling, while at the same time exercising their right and duty to assist the members of the Church in discerning the true voice of the Spirit in their lives. At the same time the people have the right to expect from those in authority more than passive toleration of public witness to gospel values in the world—those in authority must exercise a true leadership role at the head of the people. The sluggishness of the hierarchy or pastors in some places with regard to questions of social justice and human dignity has given rise to justified cries of "too little, too late."

## Conclusion

I should like to close this admittedly inadequate treatment of

the vast problem of ecclesiastical authority and the concepts of freedom and democracy with two simple thoughts.

First, we as Franciscans are blessed to be in a Tradition whose founder clearly recognized the basic nature of authority in the Church as service in love, and who insisted that his superiors be called "ministers" and that the friars be able to treat with them "as masters with their servants". This is an ideal which we must carefully preserve and where necessary re-originate in the Order, so that we may bear witness to the whole Church of the possibility of truly evangelical use of ecclesiastical authority.

Secondly, I would like to close where I began, with a thought from Cardinal Wright, who realizes as we must that our ideal cannot be to completely eliminate *all* tension between authority and freedom in the Church.

In a dynamic society, and the Church must always be such, there is a *tension* as well as a harmony between that liberty which, unchecked, could degenerate into chaos and the control that, unchecked, could freeze into despotism. Hence in the Church, when the basic relations are in order and both forces are strong, we shall not regret the occasional painful stresses and perhaps embarrassing strains which reveal that the tension between individual conscience and collective authority is at work. Quite the contrary, we shall rejoice in the evidence that this gives of organic vitality, recognizing not only that tension remains even after the two forces are harmoniously reconciled, but that tension is essential to the harmony itself.<sup>37</sup>

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> John J. Wright, "Conscience and Authority," *Critic* 22:5 (April-May, 1964), 11-28.

<sup>2</sup> Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, n. 55. *A.S.S.* 3 (1867), 168-76.

<sup>3</sup> Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili* (1878); *Immortale Dei* (1885); *Libertas Praestantissimus* (1888).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Leo XIII, *Diuturnum*, *A.S.S.* 14 (1881), 3-14; and *Immortale Dei*, *A.S.S.* 18 (1885), 161-80.

<sup>5</sup> Pius XII, Christmas Message (*Benignitas et Humanitas*), Dec. 24, 1944. *A.A.S.* 37 (1945), 10-23.

<sup>6</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, n. 159. *A.A.S.* 55 (1963), 257-304.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vos*, August 15, 1832. Cf. Henry Denziger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. by Roy J. Deferrari (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1957), n. 1613.

<sup>8</sup> *Syllabus of Errors*, esp. n. 77 ("In this age of ours it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be treated as the sole state religion and that any other forms of religious worship should be excluded."), and n. 78 ("Hence those states, nominally Catholic, who have legally enacted that immigrants be permitted to have free exercises of their own particular religion, are to be praised."). English from Denziger, *Sources*, nn. 1777-78.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Libertas Praestantissimus*, A.S.S. 20 (1888), 593-613.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Pius XI, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* (June 29, 1931), A.A.S., 23 (1931), 285-312; and *Mit Brennender Sorge* A.A.S. 29 (1937), 145-67.

<sup>11</sup> *Pacem in Terris*, n. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Vatican II, *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, n. 3 and n. 7. A.A.S. 58 (1966), 929-46.

<sup>13</sup> The exact reference slips me. It is found somewhere in Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958).

<sup>14</sup> Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n. 19. A.A.S. 57 (1965), 5-72.

<sup>15</sup> John L. McKenzie, *Authority in the Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), 36-37.

<sup>16</sup> Yves Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, trans. by Jennifer Nicholson (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), 40-79.

<sup>17</sup> St. Cyprian, ep. 14:4. Quoted by Congar, 43.

<sup>18</sup> "For you I am bishop: with you I am a Christian." Sermon 340:1; cf. Congar, p. 54.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted by Congar, 68.

<sup>20</sup> Congar, 70.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. McKenzie, ch. 2 and ch. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. McKenzie, ch. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Bernard Häring, *The Liberty of the Children of God* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1966), 55-56.

<sup>24</sup> Karl Rahner, "The Theology of Freedom," in *Freedom and Man*, edited by John Courtney Murray (New York: Kenedy, 1965), 201-217.

<sup>25</sup> "Towards a Declaration of Christian Freedoms," *Jurist* 29 (Jan. 1969), 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> The American Hierarchy, "On Individual Responsibility," *Catholic Mind* 59 (1961), 559-60.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. John L. McKenzie, "The Freedom of the Christian," in *Religious Liberty: an End and a Beginning*, edited by John Courtney Murray (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 97-98.

<sup>28</sup> Piet Fransen, "Grace and Freedom," in *Freedom and Man*, 52.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Charles Malik, "The Metaphysics of Freedom," in *Freedom and Man*, 183-200.

<sup>30</sup> Congar, 137.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Aidan Kavanagh, "How Rite Develops: some laws intrinsic to liturgical evolution," *Worship* 41 (June-July, 1967), 334ff; also Walter J. Kelly, "The Authority of Liturgical Laws," *Jurist* 28 (June-Oct., 1968), 397-424.

<sup>32</sup> Häring, 43 ff.



<sup>33</sup> Ladislav M. Orsey, "The Problem of Constitutional Law in the Church," *Jurist* 29 (Jan. 1969), 55. See also "The Reform of Canon Law," *Herder Correspondence* 6 (April, 1969), 99-105.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Francois Houtard, *The Eleventh Hour* (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), 102-107.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Congar, 103-131.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Karl Rahner, *Servants of the Lord* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 35-37.

<sup>37</sup> Wright, 28.

## THE THEOLOGIAN AND TRUTH

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The *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* of Vatican II itself indicates that theology must constantly be reshaped when it states: "theologians are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the men of their times. For the deposit of faith or revealed truths are one thing; the manner in which they are formulated without violence to their meaning and significance is another."<sup>1</sup> There is scarcely any more urgent problem in contemporary theology than that of the reformulation of doctrine in view of man's present understanding of himself and his historical existence in the world. The question of reformulation is really the question of the nature of truth itself. And I think it is no exaggeration to say that the way the theologian conceives his task regarding contemporary reformulation is precisely the way he understands what theological truth is and how it comes to light in man's experience by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. The present concern about this question of truth is not only a matter of the relationship of theology to other sciences and intellectual disciplines; it is more immediately a question about the relationship of theology and theologians to the magisterium of the Church. Of course, the publication of *Humanae Vitae* by Pope Paul last summer has made the question particularly acute. For the issues which the encyclical on birth control raises are not only problems about authority, but problems about authority in relation to *truth*, and about the nature and development of truth itself.

Karl Rahner, who usually grasps the core of a problem, has put very sharply the problem of authority vis-à-vis truth as it is developed in various contemporary investigations and utilized in theology: "How is the holder of teaching authority in the Church supposed to judge a definite, particular theology if he *does not* know it and *cannot* really know it? I mean, if he cannot really understand it in the light of the presuppositions it is using from

secular sciences because he does not know these presuppositions?"<sup>2</sup> I think that Rahner is very clearly suggesting that the real issue in the crisis of contemporary theology is the question of truth. How is the truth discovered? What are the criteria by which it is recognized? What is the function of experience, of the human sciences, of Church authority in the process of the development of truth? What is the relationship of the community and authority in regard to truth? What does a significant change in man's historical awareness and his social experience indicate about truth? What does it mean when there is a real or apparent conflict regarding the nature of truth between Church authority and vast numbers of the faithful who think in different categories? How does the theologian understand his task in relation to the past, the present, and future conceptualizations of theological truth?

These are the questions—to specify just a few—which I see at the center of the present crisis in theology. It is the corporate task of our entire generation to discover adequate answers to these questions. I would not, therefore, presume to offer neat solutions in a paper such as this. However, what I do want to do is delineate as clearly as possible the dimensions of the problem and locate the difficulties, in order to suggest some approaches for grappling with it in a creative fashion. Bemoaning the problem will not solve it; understanding the issues which really underlie the current crisis might at least provide a first step for dealing with it intelligently and realistically. What I propose to do is first set forth some instances of fairly recent statements by Church authorities and contemporary theologians which indicate that today's basic problem is that of a conception of truth. Then I will briefly summarize a few conceptions of truth which emerge from the work of several contemporary thinkers, and which will serve to sketch aspects of the contemporary consciousness of truth. Hopefully, some pointers which will be fruitful for understanding the theologian's work vis-à-vis truth will emerge from these considerations.

### Instances delineating the problem

The first instance of a theological statement which suggests how the truth issue is the key to the current crisis is a letter by Cardinal Ottaviani addressed to the presidents of the bishops' conference

in July, 1966. In this letter he gives ten examples either of mistakes in theology, or of cases where explicit distinctions are required. The fourth "error" he cites as current among some theologians is stated thus: "with regard to the existence of an objective, absolute, firm and immutable truth, some virtually deny it and subject all truth to a certain relativism, maintaining that all truth necessarily follows the rhythm of the evolution of consciousness and history."<sup>3</sup> Ottaviani implies that truth, being absolute and immutable, exists somehow apart from the consciousness of mankind and the course of historical evolution, and he thereby excludes any notion of real development.

The second instance is found in a letter of the Italian Episcopal Conference to the clergy and laity of Italy, January 1968. A notion of the Church is articulated here which sees it as a growing organism: "The Church . . . presents itself in its totality as a living organism which grows and 'develops' in the knowledge of truth received once and for all through the announcement of the Gospel. . . ."<sup>4</sup> The letter continues with this important and meaningful passage:

This "development" takes place in two senses: in the sense of an inner growth of the "knowledge," of an ever deeper knowledge of faith toward the goals of the fullness of truth, and in the sense of an incessant confrontation and dialogue of the Word of God with the words of man and with his problems, in order to weave it into the living fabric of the new situations in which mankind continuously finds itself. The answer the world expects from the Church is a concrete, actual answer, in keeping with the problems set by life and by history.<sup>5</sup>

This general reference to knowledge and development gets particular attention with regard to theology. "Religious assent," the Italian hierarchy says, "does not exclude frank contribution on the part of those who are particularly enlightened with sacred doctrine and experience to the further elaboration of the noninfallible magisterial acts of the Church."<sup>6</sup> The letter goes on to deal expressly with the task of theologians: "The competent are above all the theologians. Illumined by faith, they apply their intelligence to examining and deepening the data of revelation. . . . Their



task is to clarify faith, to justify and defend it, to unfold the unfathomable riches it contains, to spread its light on all reality and on all the events in history.”<sup>7</sup> The letter even makes a reference to pluralism in theology when it says: “. . . theology does not know boundaries, either of subjects, objects or research aids. It can in fact and must belong to everyone without discrimination between Religious and laymen. It can and must be interested in all the problems which torment men; it can and must develop all the resources of reason, all the cultures and the true and perennial values of all the philosophies—ancient and modern—and all the positive contribution of science.”<sup>8</sup>

Now what is important for us to note about this letter of the Italian hierarchy which in some respects sounds a very contemporary note, is that on closer analysis it seems to recognize only one sphere of creativity for the theologian. The letter envisions the task of the theologian as that of research into fields yet unexplored, but precisely “in order to find a language which expresses in adequate form the old dogmas to the new sensibility, as well as in order to extend to the new problems the authentic Christian solution.”<sup>9</sup> The theologian, according to the view which this letter expresses, is to prepare the ground for the magisterium’s judgment—that, and just that. The letter puts it: “It is therefore obvious that theology can prepare the material on which the magisterium of the Church will have to express its judgment.”<sup>10</sup> In regard to judgments already made by the magisterium, the theologians task is restricted to “helping the faithful to understand the words of the pastors, interpreting their documents and encouraging the deepening and the spreading of the doctrine they contain. . . .”<sup>11</sup> In section 7 of the letter devoted to “Present Day Responsibilities of the Italian Theologians,” the Italian hierarchy is more specific and more liberal, especially in reference to the “freedom of inquiry.”<sup>12</sup> But I have already indicated the crucial thrust of this document: it is the issue of truth. A view of what theology is about and what the purposes of its research are, is displayed in the letter. This view is perhaps more subtle than the one evidenced in Cardinal Ottaviani’s letter, but it is nonetheless definite and, moreover, geared in the same direction.

The third instance of recent theological statements suggesting

the problem of truth which I wish to mention is that of some internationally known theologians grouped around the publishing venture of *Concilium*. Last summer this group issued a formal statement and sent it to theologians around the world. The statement made clear that the freedom of the theologian and of theology in the service of the Church must be preserved. Specifically, this document states: "We are fully aware that we theologians can err in our theology. We are convinced, however, that erroneous theological conceptions cannot be rooted out by force. In our world they can only be put right and corrected by free and unimpeded objective argument and debate among scholars, in which the truth can gain the victory through and by itself."<sup>13</sup> Such freedom is understood by these theologians as one of the fruits and exigencies of the liberating message of Jesus, and it remains a fundamental aspect of the freedom of the sons of God in the Church. The statement goes on to affirm the expectation that authority in the Church will be supportive rather than repressive, for what is at stake is the very credibility of the Church in the modern world: "For that reason we expect from the pastoral teaching office of the Pope and the Bishops that it will trust as a matter of course our 'sensus Ecclesiae,' and that it will support without any prejudice whatsoever our work as theologians for the welfare and well-being of mankind in the Church and in the world."<sup>14</sup> These theologians also speak of the necessity of the "legitimate plurality of modern theological schools and of forms of mental outlook,"<sup>15</sup> and they call for such diversified representation in the composition of the Roman curia and especially the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. Now the conception of the theology which is expressed in this statement differs notably from that exhibited in the two previous documents we have quoted; nonetheless, all three have in common a concern for the question of truth as fundamental to the understanding of what theology is all about.

A fourth document, or rather a series of them, dealing with the issue of truth and the theologian comes from Karl Rahner. He has written extensively on the matter, but we can here pick out his lectures given at St. Louis University in the autumn of 1967, and his article last September in the *National Catholic Reporter* commenting on *Humanae Vitae*. In the latter, Rahner

makes several important remarks on the function of theologians with respect to truth. First, he notes that theologians who have a professional obligation to speak today find themselves in a difficult position in regard to *Humanae Vitae* because in the earlier encyclical of Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, it was declared that "a papal doctrinal declaration even if it is not a definition *ex cathedra* is no longer subject to free discussion of theologians. This declaration, to be sure, was not repeated in the Constitution of the Church . . . even though it was contained in the original sketch of this dogmatic constitution; but even in this Constitution it *is* said that such a doctrinal expression is to be accepted by the theologians with a 'religious consent.'"<sup>16</sup> Rahner goes on to set down some important aspects of the theologians work which point to the tremendous interest of contemporary theology in the nature of truth. He says that the "declaration of the church magisterium can no longer mean today in the concrete circumstances in the church and in the secular world, that a moral theologian either has to defend such a doctrinal expression through thick and thin as if it were simply the only and safe and unquestioned interpretation for all time, or simply keep silent."<sup>17</sup> But Rahner even goes beyond this to say that the theologian has to "insure by all means that he communicates to his listeners what pertains to the papal teaching as well as to the formal authority of the magisterium . . . and to the basic reasons which stand behind the papal position. He will however, on the other hand, not be permitted to be silent about the already objectively present and subjectively very effective difficulties that counter the papal teaching, because otherwise he would lack credibility with his listeners. He will, moreover, attempt to develop a genuine conscience in his listeners, even if he is not able to ascertain that this formation of conscience is equally successful with everybody."<sup>18</sup>

Now I am personally convinced that Rahner's reference to the credibility of the theologian to his listeners is basically raising the question of the nature of truth involved. It is not merely the function of authority to decide on the nature of truth, but it is truth itself which should be studied and investigated. Rahner is here suggesting the attitude of the Church of the Fathers and the

Middle Ages, I think, which stressed *what* is being taught rather than *who* is doing the teaching.

Although Rahner's St. Louis lectures were given earlier than this NCR article, in them he actually goes further on the point of theology and truth. He especially addresses himself to theological strategy for the future. What should theologians do in view of Cardinal Ottaviani's letter, which we have already mentioned? Rahner asks explicitly: "how can we move from a merely defensive position over against dangerous or erroneous views and tendencies to an 'offensive' theology?"<sup>19</sup> This "offensive" theology is an interesting term used by Rahner. He certainly is referring to more than a mere explication of set doctrine by it; Rahner is clearly indicating that theology must actively inquire into contemporary issues and offer answers to contemporary problems on their own ground. He continues:

Without detriment to the fundamental obligation of the Church to preserve and defend the whole deposit of faith, does not the teaching authority of the Church, trusting in the inner strength of Christian truth, also have the right, and perhaps the obligation, to seize upon the crucial points in this struggle? Would that not be better than dissipating its limited energies by fighting on all fronts and winning nowhere? It should not think that it must always do here and now everything that really has to be done. For example, a struggle could be waged against false views in the theory and practice of indulgences. But a well-directed struggle against atheism is certainly a more urgent problem.<sup>20</sup>

Then Rahner states what I consider to be very important for the problem we are here considering: "Could we not in general have a more aggressive and, in a good sense, better organized strategy in our theological endeavors? A strategy in which the bishops and theologians would form more clearly than now a single community, instead of the theologians always representing the critical element, and the bishops the conservative element in the Church."<sup>21</sup>

I think that the connecting link between bishops and theologians is not so much authority, but the nature of truth which must be recognized by both groups and equally served by them.



Let me add one more reference to Rahner's position where his pluralistic understanding of theology comes to the fore:

In a situation of theological pluralism with its unlimited possibilities with regard to conceptualization, language, and nuances, the condemnation of a particular position allows the censured theologian, with no detriment to genuine obedience, much more room to maneuver, if we can put it that way. It allows him more room to say what he means in another way than he had formerly. At that time a definite formula was much more likely to strike one as the only possible way to objectify his own religious and apparently inalienable experience. Being censured must have touched the censured more deeply and "existentially" than will be the case tomorrow. In the future, given such a pluralistic situation, the individual will hopefully be more clearly aware of the inadequacy of his language and its unintelligibility to others than seems to be the case with us today in our western intellectual tradition.<sup>22</sup>

This is an explicit reference to the nature of truth and different approaches to the same truth, as well as different conceptualizations which should not only be tolerated, but actually promoted in theology. Rahner nowhere poses the issue more clearly than when he raises the issue of *language* in theology:

However much we must constantly make the effort to speak a *single* language, to understand one another, and to transpose the various theologies into one another's language, this effort today has its practical limits. The attempt to impose an absolutely homogeneous theology whose questions and terminology are equally accessible to every theologian would only lead, if it could succeed at all, to the theology of a small sect which can no longer speak with the world it lives in.<sup>23</sup>

This question of the different languages contemporary theology must be able to speak is of utmost importance with regard to the whole issue of truth. I shall return later to this basic matter.

But for the moment, let us turn to the fifth statement which raises the question of the nature of truth. Here we turn to an investigation into the competence of the magisterium in regard to the natural law. A very fresh—and perhaps startling—interpretation

is given by Alfons Auer in a recent article which appeared in *Theologische Quartalschrift*.<sup>24</sup> Auer says that the binding directives issued by the magisterium in reference to moral life have reached their limits. In Auer's view, morality is a demand imposed upon the human person by created reality. In order to find out his moral obligations toward the different realities, the person must first become aware of the values they represent. These values—the different intentionalities of created realities (*fnis operis*)—must be picked up and carried through by the human person (*fnis operantis*). Morality is found in this creative tension between the two because their proportion can be characterized as the moral good.

This creative tension also means, of course, a fight for a better world. One looks at the past as given, but is called upon to take responsibility for the future. To do this, however, guidelines are needed for one's actions. Where are they to be found? In Auer's view, in the individual and community reflections on human experience. This involves reflection on both the good and the bad, and leads step by step to a deeper insight into the intentional structure of the existence of created realities. Auer calls it "Weltethos."

Neither the concept of creation, of the covenant, nor even the New Testament adds any new directives to the "Weltethos." Only new perspectives and new motivations are added. Auer's conclusion is, perhaps, astounding: morality belongs in the area of the truth of the world. Its nature must be investigated by the human spirit in the same way as physics or biology. No ecclesiastical competence can be appealed to on the basis of faith to determine concrete directives of binding force of the "Weltethos." This is so even on the ground that the Church has always recognized the objective character of the "Weltethos" in its concept of the natural law. For the truth of the world is originally entrusted to the world, and consequently moral directives should come from the human spirit and not from the Church as such. In Auer's view, the Church exercised its function in the past as a subsidiary activity, extending its authority into worldly spheres by necessity. Today the Church and its theology must exercise a different function—a criticizing function vis-à-vis moral convictions formed outside the

Church. Thus the moral consciousness of the Christian of the future will have to build itself not through one-sided magisterial decisions, but rather in dialogue with the human spirit.

Now Auer presents here in a very direct fashion the issue of where and how truth is discovered in the moral sphere of life. He certainly does not eliminate the function of authority; but Auer develops a notion of ethical truth which requires a reorientation of authority: it is called upon to criticize rather than pronounce, locate problems rather than solve them.

The sixth and final instance we can cite where a theological statement points to the key issue of truth pertains to the concept of inspiration, revelation, and the assistance of the Spirit granted to the Church. Writing in a recent issue of *Cross Currents*, Carroll Stuhlmueller sums up the new theological thinking regarding inspiration:

The major shift has come from the inside that the "inspiring" God is actually the "redeeming" God at work with his people. . . . The leader is said to be "inspired" through a special charism to "divine" the mystery of God-Redeemer already present within the community. The "supernatural" thrust of inspiration, then, does not result primarily from God's special illuminating presence in the writer, as formerly proposed in the papal documents, but rather from his redeeming presence within the community, a community which can be as wide as the universe. "Inspiration," in this interpretation, does not make events or even words "supernatural," but endows a person with a power to see and express what is already "supernatural" to the extent that the community says to the spokesman-leader "Yes, that's what is happening in our life!"<sup>25</sup>

Clearly the issue being dealt with here is that of truth: where it comes from, how it is divined, how the community and its leader are related in the experience and understanding of the truth of God expressing itself in man's life. If the community plays such an important part in understanding the concept of inspiration in contemporary theology, all the more is this role of the community given prominence in understanding the wider notion of the Spirit's assistance to the Church in its whole teaching function.

A few reflections here on the notion of the spirit's assistance

as the basic question of truth and its relation to the community, can conclude this first part of the paper and lead us into the second.

The assistance granted by the Spirit to the magisterium is advisedly termed *assistance*. Theology has never called it inspiration nor revelation, since any pronouncement of the magisterium must rest on the Word of God, and is not to be identified with it. The teaching of the magisterium rests on the Word of God, either in its written form or on the Word as understood and lived in the Christian community. As Peter Fransen says, the assistance of the Spirit is given to the magisterium in order to enable it to formulate conclusions that "do not falsify the date of revelation."<sup>26</sup> Catholic theology speaks of divine assistance, and has even distinguished positive and negative assistance. Yet we should note that it never spells out what the assistance of the Spirit means or how it operates. We might suggest, then, that one way of understanding this divine assistance would be to see it as a device whereby the Spirit operates in and through the living and believing community. Granted that, we could then say that assistance is given to the magisterium precisely in the convictions, beliefs, and growing consciousness of the real issues at stake in moral areas as they are registered, experienced, and expressed in the community of believers. Consequently, on such an understanding, the ordinary expressions of the magisterium would exercise a function of effecting a greater consciousness of specific problems, rather than being edicts to be obeyed. In such a conception, the objective priority of the magisterium in teaching and passing judgment would not be denied. What such a view stresses, however, is that there must be an interaction of the magisterium and the living faith of the community. This, of course, involves long and often painful processes of development toward intensified consciousness of truth. But this creative dialogue between the magisterium and the faithful seems a way of understanding the Spirit's assistance to the Church—and a way which is consonant with contemporary attitudes toward truth.

### Some contemporary conceptions of truth

I have been suggesting up to this point that the question of



truth and how to understand its discovery and development is at the bottom of the contemporary crisis in theology. I have gathered together a number of differing statements which I think indicate the central position of that problem. These statements have been drawn, you will have noted, from either ecclesiastical authorities or contemporary theologians. But now let us turn to other sources for a brief survey of contemporary conceptions of truth. I would like to outline some key ideas about the nature of truth from several authors who have specifically addressed themselves to that problem. First, let us consider what a Catholic philosopher, Leslie Dewart has to say, then turn to some remarks of Paul Ricoeur, a very influential Protestant philosopher. Then since two contemporary theologians have taken up the problem in its more practical dimensions, it might prove helpful to see what Charles Davis and Gregory Baum have to say in their exchange regarding the question of the Church's credibility. And finally, a contemporary Protestant theologian who has addressed himself in a particular way to the American scene, Herbert Richardson, offers some suggestions for understanding the problem of truth which may provide some beneficial leads for all of us who are concerned with the present crisis.

Leslie Dewart deals with the problem of truth from the standpoint of the epistemological view which has dominated the western philosophical and theological tradition. He poses the issue precisely in terms of *development*: can the truth of the Christian faith be said to develop in any genuine sense? When Dewart speaks of development he does not mean the unfolding of latent possibilities; he raises the issue of whether genuinely new understandings and reconceptualizations of experience are possible. In both his recent books Dewart has explicitly approached the problem of truth from this angle: "In *The Future of Belief*," he says, "I addressed myself to the question: can the Christian faith be deemed truly to develop and unequivocally to evolve (and not merely to change the outer, worn-out garment of its pristine, spotless nudity) even if it is assumed that this faith is *supernatural* and that its object is *revealed*?" And the question he takes up in *The Foundations of Belief* is "can the Christian faith be said

truly to develop and unequivocally to evolve, on the assumption that this faith is *true* and that its object is *real*?"<sup>27</sup>

The question becomes, of course, whether any formulation of truth can be definitive. Dewart's both books are a scholarly argumentation and documentation of his negative answer. The long philosophical route he traverses in making his point is guided by the principle that man's self-understanding has evolved so that his awareness of himself is a consciousness of historical relationship to a past and a self-positing power for creating a future.

For Dewart, contemporary man's self-awareness is a consciousness of his being in the world. He says "man's self-understanding is evolutionarily affected when he learns to think of truth not as a quality which accrues to the act of knowledge or as the result of playing a fair game with reality, but as the inner orientation of man's self-creativity within the world of reality."<sup>28</sup> But this consciousness of being in the world is grounded in man's subjectivity: "Man's presence to reality occurs in and through his presence to himself and, therefore, whatsoever he understands, he understands in relation to himself."<sup>29</sup> Such a view has, of course, far-reaching implications for a theory of where and how truth will be discovered or discerned.

Much of Dewart's work constitutes a critique of the Greek view of knowledge and truth which has shaped our civilization's understanding. Like John Dewey before him, Dewart views the "spectator theory of knowledge" which is the heritage of Hellenism as the source of difficulty regarding the developmental character of truth. He wants to "redefine knowledge on a *consciously* empirical basis."<sup>30</sup> Dewart's conception of truth is grounded on "the doctrine of the existential contingency of empirically given being as such—that is, as revealed by its very empirical givenness, as revealed by the observation of the empirical facts."<sup>31</sup> Man's nature, for Dewart, is to be understood in terms of his awareness of his own awareness of reality. It is precisely man's self-relation to being which makes him the kind of being he is—the conscious being, namely, *man*. Now this consciousness is a differentiation of the self, a function whereby man's being emerges.<sup>32</sup> The quality of truth for Dewart, then, is related to the development of consciousness: truth is that property of consciousness which renders

man transcendent. Truth is that which propels man beyond himself. It is that which makes human understanding "dynamic and creative, searching and self-critical, restless and progressive, and ambitious to the literally ultimate degree."<sup>33</sup>

Man is not exhausted by what he is or what his world is at any given moment. Empirical analysis of man's experience regards the present as revealing what it may become. Dewart insists that genuinely empirical analysis of experience points to that which is not yet. The transcendent dimension of human consciousness is a matter of *overcoming* the limitations of the given moment and thrusting outward. In this regard, Dewart makes an interesting observation about the correlative relationship of truth and error, as well as the essentially future orientation of truth:

We may understand this concept of truth better if we recall the correlativity of truth and error . . . if one does not respect the reality of error one is not likely to do justice to the reality of truth. I now direct our attention to the essentially retrospective character of error. It is surely not an accident that we can never experience *being* mistaken: we can only experience *having been* mistaken . . . this impossibility is indicative of the nature of error and truth. The retrospective character of error points to its converse, the prospective character of truth. The truth in which we *are*, if we are aware of the real possibility of error, notwithstanding the fact that it is not being experienced at all, must be conceived as that which we *pursue*. This pursuance-avoidance, not mutual exclusion, is what describes the nature of the opposition between true and false.<sup>34</sup>

In short, Dewart can say "the only valid 'criterion' of truth is that it create the possibility of more truth. And the most reliable sign that we are coming to the truth is that we are dissatisfied with it."<sup>35</sup>

If we turn now to Paul Ricoeur's conception of truth, we can see that he shares a basic attitude with Dewart, although Ricoeur's framework is more ethical than epistemological. Ricoeur, too, is concerned with the relationship of truth and historicity. "History is the expired history that the historian recaptures as *truth*, that is, as objectivity; but it is also the history in process that we are experiencing and making. How shall we *make it into truth*?"<sup>36</sup>

Ricoeur desires truth with such metaphors as horizon, milieu, and atmosphere of light. "The search for truth, it seems," says Ricoeur, "is characterized by being stretched, so to speak, between two poles: a personal situation, and a certain intention with respect to being. . . . And so the search for truth is itself torn between the 'finitude' of my questioning and the 'openness' of being."<sup>37</sup> Like Dewart, Ricoeur evinces a conception of truth which while not discounting the past, is ever-directed toward the future. But Ricoeur has a particular emphasis on the communal dimension of truth as well as its orientation toward the future.

Ricoeur stresses that "communication is a structure of true knowledge."<sup>38</sup> Truth can only be discovered and expressed in a community of genuine research—and research is always to search anew in view of another's perspective which redirects my own. Ricoeur insists that life is human only when lived in communication, and the very possibility of truth is found on communication: "Communication would be truth if it were total."<sup>39</sup>

Now the implications of this dialogical conception of truth have far-reaching consequences—practical as well as philosophical. It means that communication rules out any attempt to encompass or reduce the other to being part of *my* discourse. It precludes all summation. For Ricoeur, communication would be truth if communication could be achieved; but in the human situation it remains more a promise than an accomplishment, so truth remains radically open. Ricoeur speaks of the *eschatological* achievement of truth; he employs that term not in a biblical, but in a philosophical sense, to suggest a limiting concept: "I am always short of the Last Judgment. By setting up the limit of the Last Day, I thereby step down from my seat as final judge."<sup>39a</sup>

The point Ricoeur is making is, of course, that we can never "nail down" the truth. To attempt to do so is a kind of presumption whereby one acts as though the *eschaton* had already arrived. Ricoeur offers an illuminating analysis of all such attempts as "premature syntheses." He links this to the problem of the relation of truth and authority. The effort to multiply the orders of truth is a historical movement of rupture; nonetheless, the process of pluralization is countered by an inverse process of totalization. As Ricoeur understands it, the unification of the true:



is at once the wish of reason and first violence, a fault. We shall thus reach a point of ambiguity, a point of greatness and of guilt. Precisely at this point the lie strikes nearest to the quick of truth. We shall go straight to the aspect of the problem which concerns the interpretation of our civilization. Historically, the temptation to unify the true by violence comes and has come from two quarters, the clerical and the political spheres. More precisely, it can come from two *powers*, the spiritual and the temporal power. I would like to show that the clerical synthesis of the true comes about through the guilt of the special authority which the believer identifies with revealed truth...<sup>40</sup>

Ricoeur uses the term "clerical" in the pejorative sense, as opposed to "ecclesial." The fault of the clerical synthesis is that it attempts to recapitulate all levels of truth within one system. "This endeavor has its roots in the passional deviation of ecclesiastical authority into clerical power."<sup>41</sup> In authentic authority there is the function of ordering which counterbalances aimless proliferation of human talents. But the temptation always remains power. "The fault which clings to the exercise of authority is sometimes called untruth, sometimes violence."<sup>42</sup>

Now this last point of Ricoeur's leads us directly into the notions of truth which appear in Charles Davis' *A Question of Conscience*, and Gregory Baum's reply to Davis in *The Credibility of the Church Today*. For Davis convicts the Catholic Church of violence and untruth precisely on the grounds which Ricoeur terms "the clerical synthesis." And Baum attempts to present a modern apologetic for the Church, not by denying that such violence and untruth exist, but by pointing to a developing awareness of truth in the Church which would make it credible to the contemporary mind. Davis and Baum take up the problem of truth on a more practical and less speculative level; they are concerned with it as the question of truth bears on institutional credibility and individual integrity. Yet we cannot fail to note similar concerns and attitudes toward the issue of truth which we have already observed in the thought of Dewart and Ricoeur.

Davis' criticism, of course, is leveled at an institutional structure which no longer corresponds to contemporary man's self-understanding. The Church, in Davis' view, has violated the truth of

the Gospel and the good it is meant to serve: creation of community. Baum's apologetic is based on the fact that a new theological anthropology which has been accepted in the Church (even officially in the documents of Vatican II) in principle, if not yet realized in practice, really does exist. His argument is that such a conception *is* consonant with contemporary man's self-understanding, for that theological anthropology regards man as a listener and takes into account the dialogical structure of human existence.

Davis argues that in our times men understand themselves differently than in the past. "In the past we tended to understand ourselves according to a static and rationally definable human nature, and we regarded life as the actualization of capacities and principles implicit in this nature. Today, because of cultural and social evolution, we tend to understand ourselves in terms of personal being historically achieved, and therefore look upon life as the realization of human responses to reality. Human life is open-ended. Man is not defined by his nature. In his life man is summoned to assume greater responsibility for himself and freed to create his own future."<sup>43</sup>

Davis represents a rather typical contemporary attitude toward truth. According to this, fidelity to the truth demands its development. Concern for the truth absolutely requires letting go of formulations which are no longer adequate, as well as creating new institutions when present ones hinder the development of men personally or socially. Fidelity means that one follow wherever the truth points; fidelity belies the truth if it clings to the past at the expense of the present and the future. What Dewart calls "reconceptualization" Baum speaks of as "re-focusing the Gospel." Such re-focusing is required for fidelity to the Gospel, as Baum would have it. Baum outlines a three-step program which would express such fidelity to the truth:

Step one . . . consists in discerning the crucial questions of people. Already in this step the Church deals with issues that trouble her contemporaries and hence, inevitably, thinks in contemporary terms. In step two the Church listens to the experience of the world and tries to discern in it the presence of God's Word. The Church

tries to find the divine reply to the present predicament as the focus that will make her message the Good News for the present. Inevitably, this will be expressed in a language and in concepts taken from contemporary cultural experience. The third step, the re-interpretation of Christian teaching in the light of the new focus, enables the Church to speak of the whole of Christian teaching in new terms proper to the culture in which she lives and in which she teaches. We conclude, therefore, that with these three steps the Gospel has been translated into a new cultural language.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

We have been considering several contemporary conceptions of truth, in order to provide a background for understanding the problem of the theologian and truth in the present situation in the Church. There is, of course, no such thing as *the* contemporary conception of truth—for if any one thing is characteristic of people today is the resistance to any one conception which might purportedly describe a collective mentality. The recognition of pluralism in all dimensions of experience and thought is a mark of contemporary culture. But if it is impossible to speak of a contemporary conception of truth, it is perhaps possible to sketch certain attitudinal traits which show up in widely different intellectual frameworks. That is what I have been attempting to do in this second part of the paper. Herbert Richardson, in *Toward an American Theology*, has coined a helpful term which will be useful in dealing with this problem of truth and the contemporary mind, and which may suggest some solutions for the current dilemma of theologians. Richardson speaks of the "intellectus" of an era and/or a culture, to get away from the systematic overtones of "worldview" and yet describe the "complex, unsystematic, pluralistic character of that matrix of meaning which is the felt basis for our discourse, not only about what is true and good but even what is real. An intellectus is rooted not in thought, but in feeling; and feeling determines the kinds of things about which we want to know the truth."<sup>45</sup> We might then well speak of the contemporary intellectus regarding truth—all the more because one of the more prominent traits of the contemporary intellectus in general is its particular attitude toward the question of truth.

In brief, as Richardson says, the contemporary intellectus "affirms the socially relative character of all judgments."<sup>46</sup>

Richardson proposes a scheme of correlating five basic forms of secularism with five corresponding forms of faith. In a few deft strokes, Richardson manages to sketch the basic forms of intellectus characteristic of Christian history. He says:

In these five correlations, the following intellectus are at stake: mystical rationalism, scientific naturalism, skeptical criticism, gnosticism, and relativism. Each of these major forms of intellectus has dominated a given cultural period, and each found its classic opponent in some Christian theologian who opened it to divine transcendence by correlating it with an appropriate notion of faith. In each of the five the form of faith is different, since the form of faith is determined by the tendency of the particular intellectus it opposes. And every form of faith involves a different way of understanding divine transcendence.<sup>47</sup>

The form of faith which corresponds to gnosticism is *crucifiens*; to rationalism, *quarens*; to naturalism, *perficiens*; to skepticism, *formans*; and to relativism, *reconcilians*. It would be worth doing a paper on each of these correspondences alone, but here we can only briefly take note of the last, that form of faith which Richardson sees as correlating with the current intellectus. With keen insight Richardson describes it thus:

Now, if we seek a conception of faith which is appropriately correlated with relativism, we shall define faith as the power of reconciliation which works to unite the many relative perspectives and to thwart ideological conflict. In this context, faith is the commitment of man to oppose the separation of man from man. It is a commitment to struggle against the attacks on the common good, against racialism and segregation, and against the fragmentation of man's intellectual and spiritual life.<sup>48</sup>

Now may I suggest that such a conception opens many avenues for dealing with the problem of truth. It recognizes, first of all, that it is simply impossible to escape the intellectus of one's time. If religion in general and theology in particular is to serve any purpose, it must recognize, understand, and appreciate in all its dimensions the contemporary intellectus. For then and only then



will the Church and the Christian be able to speak to the real men of this world and these times about the real issues of their lives. That does not mean, however, that the Church simply absorbs or uncritically assimilates the contemporary intellectus. It means precisely that in dialogue with it, the Church makes man critically aware of the pitfalls of the intellectus of a culture, in order that truth may be discerned. I think the merit of Richardson's analysis is that he provides a way for theologians (as well as all serious Christians) to see that the issue of truth must be located squarely in terms of a relationship of tension between the prevailing secularism and the possible form of faith which correlates with it. I have tried to indicate in this paper that no one perspective, no one conception, no one way of thinking, is adequate to the task of discovering and proclaiming the truth. When Richardson proposes that *reconciliation* is the appropriate form of faith for our times, I think he is saying our task is to work at overcoming our prejudices, our settled opinions, our accustomed patterns of thought and action. That is the task of the ordinary Christian, the theologian, and we might even say, of the magisterium itself.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," No. 62, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York, 1966), pp. 268-269.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Rahner, "Philosophizing in Theology" in *Theology Digest* (February, 1968), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Cardinal Ottaviani to the presidents of the bishops' conferences, July 24, 1966, quoted in "Theology and the Magisterium after the Council," *Theology Digest* (February, 1968), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Theology and Magisterium: A Joint Letter of the Italian Episcopal Conference to the Clergy and Laity of Italy*, January 16, 1968 (Washington, D.C., 1969), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Statement of the theologians associated with the publication of *Concilium*, *Revue Internationale de Theologie*, circulated in letter form, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Karl Rahner, "On the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*" in the *National Catholic Reporter* (September 18, 1968), p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Rahner, "Theology and the Magisterium," *Theology Digest* (February, 1968), p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Rahner, "Philosophizing in Theology," in *Theology Digest* (February, 1968), p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Alfons Auer, "Nach dem Erscheinen der Enzyklika '*Humanae Vitae*'—Zenh Thesen über die Findung sittlicher Weisungen," in *Theologische Quartalschrift* vol. 149 (No. 1, 1969), pp. 75-85.

<sup>25</sup> Carroll Stuhlmueller, "The Natural Law Question the Bible Never Asked," *Cross Currents* (Winder, 1969), p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Fransen, "The Authority of the Councils," in *Problems of Authority*, ed. John M. Todd (Baltimore: 1962), pp. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Leslie Dewart, *The Foundations of Belief* (New York, 1969), p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 466.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>32</sup> *The Future of Belief* (New York, 1966), pp. 90-96.

<sup>33</sup> *Foundations of Belief*, p. 326.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 327-328.

<sup>35</sup> *Future of Belief*, p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth* (Evanston, 1965), p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>39a</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Gregory Baum, *The Credibility of the Church Today: a Reply to Charles Davis* (New York, 1968), p. 178. In this passage Baum is summarizing Davis' position on the incredibility of the Church in view of man's new self-understanding.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>45</sup> Herbert W. Richardson, *Toward an American Theology* (New York, 1967), p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

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The winds of change have badly shaken the previously stable house of moral theology. The philosophies of moral relativism, situationism, existentialism, and personalism are no longer confined to ponderous textbooks or university lecture halls. They have been popularized—in paperbacks, in Gallup polls, in television specials—and they are common topics of discussion in coffee houses and cocktail parties. So the moral philosopher and theologian as been challenged to re-examine not only some of his conclusions, but practically all of his basic premises. In his discomfort he has turned for help (if not relief) to the modern behavioral sciences, especially psychology.

In itself this is certainly a wise move, since a meaningful system of ethics must be based on a sound psychology of the human person. However, our philosopher or theologian is likely to be disappointed. Traditional psychology has been more interested in things like intellectual and sexual development than in moral development. But in recent years investigators have begun to see moral behavior as a very fruitful and relevant area for research. Thanks to studies like these, we are now beginning to formulate a more systematized understanding of how people develop standards of morality and how their behavior is influenced by these standards. In this paper I will try to summarize this body of knowledge and then discuss what I see as some of the implications for our pastoral ministry.

Somewhat arbitrarily, perhaps, I will try to sketch moral development in terms of psychosexual development. If we regard psychosexual development as the process of learning how to love, then it makes good sense to identify this process with the development of moral values. And indeed, this approach seems especially valid in the light of current thinking in moral theology, which sees all of morality as response to the basic Christian law of love.<sup>1</sup>

The first thing psychology tells us is that human beings are not "born lovers." The capacity to love is something that has to be learned. It has to grow through successive developmental stages, just like other human capacities such as intelligence or language. And this is what psychologists mean by "psychosexual development." The term implies, first of all, that it involves the total personality, not just the mind or the emotions or the sexual apparatus. Secondly, it is called "sexual" both because the process of growth in love is always stamped by the sex (male or female) of the person, and also because the final term of the process is the capacity to form a mature and satisfying relationship with a person of the opposite sex. This final term, called "psychosexual maturity," is described by Marc Oraison as the ability of the individual to enter into harmonious dialogue with other persons, "without obscure anxieties, without incoherent aggressiveness, without exclusive possessiveness, in an increasingly fruitful rhythm of exchanges. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Growth in the capacity to love, then, is a life-long process. Modern psychoanalytic writers, such as Harry Stack Sullivan<sup>3</sup> and Erik Erikson,<sup>4</sup> trace this developmental process through a sequence of stages culminating in late adolescence. Not that psychosexual maturity is fully reached there, but by late adolescence the person ideally ought to be able to initiate mature love relationships. It is easy to see that in the first year of life the newborn infant is incapable of love. Its whole concern is to survive, and all its activity is aimed at insuring that its basic needs will be met. Freud described this first stage of life as "narcissistic," after the mythical figure of Narcissus, the beautiful youth who fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool. Freud realized that the infant is self-centered only because he is helpless, not because he's in love with himself. But he liked to use the term narcissism to describe the behavior of adults who are as demanding and preoccupied with their own needs as are infants. In their well known study of character development, Peck and Havighurst<sup>5</sup> found five major character "types" among the adolescents they studied. The most primitive they labeled as the "amoral" type and described him as an "infantile, impulsive, and irresponsible kind of personality." He is characterized by lack of internalized moral principles and



little regard for the rights and feelings of others. It is interesting to note how closely this corresponds to Freud's description of infant narcissism.

The period of early childhood, from the end of the first year to the beginning of school, is the stage of dependency. Now the child's world no longer revolves around himself. He becomes aware that he is distinct from his parents and from other creatures in his environment. Not only that, but he begins to form relationships with them. This is a very important period from the point of view of psychosexual development. The child has to learn that his whims are not always going to be indulged. He also has to learn that other people besides himself have rights and he doesn't have unlimited control over them. He is dependent on his parents for his needs, but they have power to give or to withhold. This marks the beginning of conscience and the development of inner control over one's actions. But this is still primitive, because the child's behavior will be determined largely by whether he wins the approval or disapproval of his parents. Here is where severity on the one hand, or over-indulgence on the other, can either teach a child to be fearful of others or make him skillful in the art of manipulating them for his own ends. And either will stunt his capacity for real love and moral responsibility. Again, Peck and Havighurst's findings are relevant here. The second character type they found was the "expedient" type. He is still primarily self-centered in that "he considers other people's welfare only to gain his own ends; he follows the moral standards of the group only so long as it suits his purpose, primarily to get what he wants and to avoid social disapproval."<sup>6</sup> Obviously this type of person has not outgrown the childhood stage of moral development.

When the child enters school, he begins what Sullivan calls "the juvenile era." This experience widens his sphere of interpersonal relationships. For the first time in his life he spends the major part of the day outside his own family circle and in the company of his peers. This constitutes another task in psychosexual development: the child has to learn how to get along with these people. As Sullivan puts it, he has to learn the three C's—cooperation, competition, and compromise. Although there are

some moments of genuine altruism in this stage, as when the child shares something of his own with others, for the most part his interpersonal relationships are based on expediency: he *has* to cooperate and compromise, or he'll be ostracized from the group. His moral code, too, becomes heavily influenced by the standards of the group, even more so than by his parents. Another development that takes place during this period is that the child's moral concepts become generalized. He learns, for example, that stealing is wrong regardless of whether it is money, property, or the work of others as in cheating.<sup>7</sup> Here is where moral confusion can set in if the child discovers inconsistency between the values his parents verbalize and their actual behavior. Developmental problems at this stage of life can retard the progress of character formation and growth in the capacity to love. Peck and Havighurst found that many of their subjects showed a "conforming" character type. Their chief moral principle is to do what others do and expect him to do. They "follow" rules and laws specific for each occasion instead of having generalized moral principles."<sup>8</sup>

The period from about nine to twelve is called by Sullivan "the preadolescent era." He considers this a critical stage in psychosexual development, because it is here that the child first begins to reach out to others in genuine love. Out of the "gang" of peers he associates with, he gradually begins to gravitate toward one or two special "chums" of the same sex, with whom he can share feelings of closeness, loyalty, and confidence. For the first time, the satisfaction and well-being of the other become as important as one's own satisfaction and well-being. This is why Sullivan says the child is really beginning to love. And if the previous stages have not prepared him for this, chances are he won't be able to find a real chum and he'll end up joining with other misfits into a delinquent or anti-social gang.

The warm friendships of the preadolescent era are generally not complicated by sexual overtones. Some sex play may occur between the friends, but this is usually motivated by curiosity rather than by homosexual tendencies, at least among normal youngsters. With the onset of puberty, however, this relatively carefree period comes to an end and adolescence begins—the period that some exasperated psychiatrists refer to (and most parents agree) as "tem-

porary psychosis." Now sexual drives and the attractions of the opposite sex become powerful forces in the person's life. From the viewpoint of psychosexual development, we might expect a rather smooth transition from loving a chum of one's own sex to loving a sweetheart of the opposite sex. But experience shatters that neat little theory. For one thing, the desire for sexual gratification tends to obscure concern for the total good of the partner. Moreover, another factor comes into play here, namely, the adolescent's need to achieve a sense of identity. Erikson<sup>9</sup> says that this is *the* developmental task of adolescence; the young person must develop a realistic sense of who he is and what role he wants to take in life. The capacity for mature love cannot be achieved without this sense of identity. This is why the love affairs of adolescents cannot be anything but immature. The partners are testing themselves out and defining themselves through their relationships with others. In particular, they are establishing their psychosexual identity: they are finding out what it means to be male or female. This is why their "I love you" so often means "I need you." They need each other to discover who they are.

Gradually, however, at least in the normal person, these ego-centric needs are reduced and the person becomes capable of a mature love relationship. This means, as Erich Fromm says,<sup>10</sup> the ability to give oneself to others without losing one's own integrity or destroying the other's. Moreover, it means that one has achieved the capacity to form a mature sexual relationship with a person of the opposite sex, even though he may freely choose not to do so. If psychosexual development has not reached a point where such a total sharing and self-giving is at least possible, the whole personality has failed to mature, and this will affect the ability to love anyone.

The final two character types found in Peck and Havighurst's adolescents represent increasing degrees of moral maturity. The "rational-conscientious" type has developed his own internal standards of conduct, but he is rigid in applying his moral principles. To him, an act is good or bad because he defines it as such, not because of the good or ill effects it may have on others. We might say he has a legalistic approach to morality. On the other hand, the "rational-altruistic" type, while he also has a stable set

of moral principles, tries to appraise a given act in the light of the motives behind it and whether or not it serves others as well as himself. He is more willing to let his behavior be determined by basic goals and values rather than by inflexible rules.

Having outlined the sequence of moral development from a psychological viewpoint, we are now in a position to discuss some of the pastoral implications. For one thing, it should be fairly obvious that moral development is only roughly correlated with chronological age. So many other factors enter into the maturing process—parental affection and discipline, parental example, peer group pressures, television, and so on. We have all seen adults who have somehow remained fixated at certain levels of psychosexual development. The domineering, the dependent, the competitive, the withdrawn, the manipulative—all these represent sad failures in the task of learning how to love. This makes us question, for example, the realism of assigning a fixed chronological age as “the age of reason” or the age at which one becomes capable of committing mortal sin. The age of seven as the time of rational evaluation was adopted by Canon Law from Roman civil law (the *Corpus Juris Civilis* of Justinian I, promulgated in 529 A.D.). It was taken over during the Middle Ages, when little was known about psychological development. O’Neil and Donovan<sup>11</sup> have argued persuasively that most children are incapable of committing mortal sin before the age of 13 or 14. To commit a mortal sin, they say, a child must be at least confusedly aware of the principle: God is my highest good. This implies that he must be capable of abstract reasoning. Moreover, he must be able to relate this abstraction to a concrete, existential situation (i.e., this sinful act would destroy his friendship with God). And, he must be able to evaluate his action in terms of his ultimate goal. Basing their arguments of the research of Piaget, Kohlberg and others on the development of children’s thinking, the authors conclude that few youngsters before the age of 13 or so are capable of such complex understanding. While their thesis may not be entirely convincing, it does point up the unrealism of presuming moral maturity in young children.

But while it would be wrong for us to neglect developmental psychology in our understanding of moral behavior, it would be



no less a mistake to play down man's responsibility in his ethical choices. Indeed, I find it an interesting paradox, to say the least, that at the very time when moral theologians seem more prone than ever to absolve men from moral guilt and sin, many psychologists are moving in the opposite direction: they are stressing the importance of man's taking responsibility for his life choices. This movement has been gaining momentum in the past ten years, and it has come to be known as the "third force" in psychology (psychoanalysis and behaviorism being the first two forces). More popularly, it goes by the name of "existential" or "humanistic" psychology, and it includes such formidable names as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Viktor Frankl, Rollo May, Hobart Mowrer, and E. J. Shoben.

Perhaps the most popularly known among these thinkers is the Viennese psychiatrist Viktor Frankl. His first book, *Man's Search for Meaning*,<sup>12</sup> is as widely read on college campuses (and among nuns) as is Chardin. He states very directly that three factors characterize man's existence as such: his spirituality, his freedom, and his responsibility. He challenges Freud's assertion that if you subject a group of people to the same kind of treatment, they will respond in the same basic way—because of their inborn, biological instincts. Frankl says that in the concentration camp where he was a prisoner he witnessed the contrary: some men degenerated while others attained virtual saintliness. He also quotes Robert Lifton, writing about the American soldiers in North Korean prisoner-of-war camps: "There were examples among them both of altruistic behavior as well as the most primitive forms of struggle for survival." What makes the difference? Frankl says it is man's ability to respond in freedom to the demands of a situation. "Thus," he writes, "man is by no means merely a product of heredity and environment. There is a third element: decision. Man ultimately decides for himself. And in the end, education must be education toward the ability to decide."<sup>13</sup>

If Frankl is the most popular of the new humanists, O. Hobart Mowrer is surely the most vociferous. Having been successively an avowed behaviorist and a psychoanalyst, and finding both systems unsatisfying, he is now highly critical of their failures. He

claims these systems have done a severe disservice to man by their notion of "double irresponsibility." That is, because of his past experiences, man cannot help acting the way he does; moreover, he can blame others for making him this way in the first place. Mowrer advocates a totally different approach, particularly in the treatment of emotional problems. It does no good, he says, to explain away the patient's guilt feelings. Rather, he must be helped to face his guilt and accept responsibility for his symptoms and problems. Only then will he be able to take constructive therapeutic action.<sup>14</sup>

Another strong advocate of moral responsibility is psychiatrist William Glasser.<sup>15</sup> He is sharply critical of traditional psychotherapy, first, because it assumes the patient is "sick," and secondly, because it aims at making him *feel* better rather than getting him to *do* something about his problems. He calls his treatment approach "reality therapy," because it focuses on helping the patient to accept the realities of his life, including his responsibility. To live responsibly, he says, means to fulfill one's basic needs in realistic ways, without interfering with other people's attempts to fulfill their basic needs. In his book he assembles quite an impressive array of data to show that this method can be applied successfully to all types of patients, including delinquents and psychotics.

But it is not only in the area of psychotherapy that the "rediscovery of responsibility," as Mowrer calls it, is taking hold. The idea is being applied in a more general and philosophical way to the whole problem of mental health. It is undoubtedly a sign of the times in psychology that in 1967 a large volume was published entitled *Morality and Mental Health*.<sup>16</sup> Edited by Hobart Mowrer, it contains no less than 78 articles by different writers, all of them critical of the trend toward permissiveness in our culture and calling for a strengthening of moral values and responsibility. Thus psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, denouncing "mental illness" as a myth, says people are not really "sick" but are suffering from "problems in living," most of them interpersonal and moral problems.<sup>17</sup> Duane Whittier has a hard-hitting paper called "Decadence and Irresponsibility," in which he assails the current trends toward subjectivity and the cult of experience for

its own sake. Psychologist E. J. Shoben takes off on Socrates' dictum that "the unexamined life is not worth living," and tries to show that the "examined life" is truly a key to mental health. In this kind of life, he says, "the person (a) proclaims himself as responsible for his own actions, i.e., he acknowledges himself as a selective choosing being; (b) inquires critically into the nature and implications of the alternatives open to him, and the motives and incentives entailed in his discarding some to accept others; and (c) evolves as part of the process of criticism a set of standards for himself by which he evaluates his own behavior."<sup>18</sup> Obviously ethical and moral concepts are strongly involved in this kind of life. Finally, no less a figure than Dr. Benjamin Spock has a contribution with the blunt title "Psychology Can't Substitute for Morality."<sup>19</sup> As one who has often been identified with the "new permissiveness," Dr. Spock's comments sound almost reactionary. He says that the emphasis in child-rearing has been so heavily on psychological factors that it has almost crowded out the moral aspects: "The effect of all this has been to make parents doubt their own standards and to dilute them—quite drastically—as they have passed them on to their children." He frankly admits that this has had unhealthy consequences. Data from the child guidance clinics, he says, show that it is the children who grow up with too little sense of moral obligation who "are likely to be miserable in childhood, to get into trouble in adolescence, and to be unhappy and ineffectual in adulthood" (p. 42).

Certainly, this kind of thinking going on in professional circles ought to sober us into not junking our pastoral role as prophets of the moral order. As religious educators, our Christian people have a right to expect more of us than some flippant, cutely-worded mouthings on "the new morality" that are nothing more than the old Freudianism. It should also check us from seeing everyone who comes to us as a helpless neurotic in need of treatment rather than as a sinner in need of forgiveness and metanoia. On the other hand, we surely do not want to return to the stern condemnations of the old-time pastor. This would be neo-moralism of the worst sort, all the more dangerous because it claims to be enlightened and scientific.

I think the best guidelines we have at present can be derived

from Adrian van Kaam's concept of "existential will."<sup>20</sup> While acknowledging that a man's will can be even drastically weakened by hurtful experiences from the past, van Kaam insists that he still has the "freedom to take a stand," or, as Frankl would say, the freedom to determine the inner *attitude* I will take toward my condition. Thus, while Mowrer and Glasser tend to hold man in some way responsible even for what happened to him in the past, Frankl and van Kaam affirm only that he is free to do something about his present and future, regardless of the past:

"In the beginning of counseling, my client may be inclined to experience himself as driven by the forces of society, or by his body chemistry, instincts, and unconscious inclinations while he drifts like a helpless raft in a stormy sea. This view undermines the possibility of a vital acceptance of freedom, guilt, and responsibility. As a result, his life has lost vitality and inspiration. . . . He becomes a robot, unable to take a personal stand in regard to his own existence and to the opinions of people around him. . . . He loves to search for agents in his life history which he can make responsible for his indecision and failure. Such a client loves to hear me talk about his childhood experiences which are the cause of his difficulties. The belief in their inevitable causal impact unburdens him, at least temporarily, of anxiety and guilt feelings. Soon, however, he may use it against therapy by believing that they not only absolve him from any responsibility for the past, but also for the present and future."<sup>21</sup>

Other counselors and therapists, particularly those of a humanistic persuasion, are also beginning to highlight the importance of helping the client to take responsibility for his *present* behavior. An interesting verbatim exchange between a therapist and an alcoholic client shows the dynamics involved in such an approach. The client has just described another drinking bout in which he terrified his wife and children; he is in the process of affirming once again how worthless he is when the therapist interrupts:

"Well, there's really nothing to feel badly about, is there?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you're no good and you never have been any good. So



plainly it's not your responsibility. Somebody else messed you up—God or your parents—but you don't have to carry the load."

"What? I'm taking the blame, aren't I? What do you want?"

"Sure, you're taking the blame and dodging the responsibility."

"It's the same thing."

"Is it? I don't think so. I've heard you take the blame a dozen times, and all I can see that it does is pay a little emotional bill for your drunk. Then the next time you can't deal with things you can get drunk again and pay the bill with blaming yourself and do it all over. You've never taken responsibility for yourself, only blame."

"Well, what's the difference?"

"Just this. If you took responsibility for the feelings you had before you started to drink, if you took responsibility for starting to drink, if you took responsibility for the way you treated Leah and the kids when you're loaded—instead of blaming it on the alcohol. . . . If you took it on yourself to know what you were doing at each of those points, what do you think would happen?"

"I wouldn't do it. But, hell, I don't think about it that way. I just get wound up, and I figure a drink would relax me, and then before I know it. . . ."

"That's the point: 'Before you know it. . . .' You're not taking responsibility. All you do is sing the 'Ain't I Bad' song so you can do it all over again."<sup>22</sup>

I often think of this passage when I hear young people, for example, saying "We just got carried away!" or when the priest and nun say, "We didn't intend to fall in love; it just happened." If they are honest, they come to admit that all the way along they made small but significant choices which they would not have had to make. She did not *have* to send him that sentimental birthday card, he did not *have* to take her hands into his while they were praying, and so on. Perhaps one of our greatest pastoral tasks today is to help people realize the importance of little decisions they make in their life. By no means does this imply that we make the decisions for them. But we can do three things. First, we can widen the range of their options by opening new doors and suggesting possibilities they may not be aware of. Secondly, we can help them evaluate the motives and values behind their choices; nothing will reveal to them more quickly the degree of

their moral maturity. And third, we can help them think through the consequences of their choices: "If you decide for this, you will have this set of benefits and problems; if you opt for that, you will have that set. Which do you think you want?"

Thus, moral maturity, the ability to love, and mental health all converge in the inner freedom of the person to take responsibility for his daily life choices. And this brings us to the very heart of the mystery of the person: he is one who is called to respond, not only to his own inner convictions and to his fellow man, but also to his God. For each day he is summoned by God to make that awesome decision set before the Israelites in the Book of Deuteronomy: "See, today I set before you life and prosperity, or death and disaster . . . choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live in the love of Yahweh your God" (Deut. 30:15-19).

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Bernard Haering's *Shalom: Peace* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968); Charles E. Curran, *New Look at Christian Morality* (Notre Dame: Fides Publishers, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> Marc Oraison, *Illusion and Anxiety* (New York: Macmillan, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Harry S. Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York: Norton, 1953).

<sup>4</sup> Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: International Universities Press, 1959).

<sup>5</sup> R. F. Peck and R. J. Havighurst, *The Psychology of Character Development* (New York: Wiley, 1962).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Developmental Psychology* (3rd ed.) (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 298.

<sup>8</sup> Peck and Havighurst, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Erickson, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-94.

<sup>10</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

<sup>11</sup> Robert P. O'Neil and Michael A. Donovan, "Psychological Development and the Concept of Mortal Sin," *Insight*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1965), pp. 1-7.

<sup>12</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962).

<sup>13</sup> ———, *The Doctor and the Soul*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1965), p. xvii.

<sup>14</sup> O. Hobart Mowrer, *The New Group Therapy* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1964).

<sup>15</sup> See his *Reality Therapy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

<sup>16</sup> O. H. Mowrer (ed.), *Morality and Mental Health* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-76. See also his book *The Myth of Mental Illness* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber, 1961).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-44.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. his *Religion and Personality* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964); also *The Art of Existential Counseling* (Wilkes-Barre: Dimension Books, 1966).

<sup>21</sup> A. van Kaam, *The Art of Existential Counseling*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>22</sup> J. F. T. Bugental, *The Search for Authenticity* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1965), pp. 339-40.

# A PORTRAIT OF THE FORMER PRIEST AND THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of priests, both diocesan and religious, relinquishing their respective roles and resuming life in the lay world is no longer an uncommon event nor an event shrouded in secrecy. The mass media—press, radio, television—has lifted the veil that once covered this issue. Even though this coverage has brought the issue into the marketplace, the sensationalism and lack of verifiable data that often accompanies mass media presentations has shrouded the whole area of the former priest with a different type of obscurity.

## Lack of Scientific Study of Issue

The whole question of the former priest stands as something of an anomaly. On the one hand the issue is much publicized and discussed, and of major concern to people in many fields, especially the field of religion, yet the entire area of the former priest for various reasons is practically devoid of serious and scientific study.

How many are leaving? Why? What are the family, ministerial, psychological backgrounds? Is there any pattern in departures based on these factors? What are the responses of friends, peers, family, and ecclesiastical authority towards a decision to leave? How do these responses affect the persons own attitude toward himself, his new life role, the church, the priesthood? What attitudinal changes and value changes take place at the departure point, and later? Insufficient scientific knowledge about these and related areas makes discussion on any incisive level difficult.

## The Gallagher Presidents' Report

Perhaps indicative of our times, the only statistical picture



available on former priests is the much publicized **THE GALLAGHER PRESIDENTS' REPORT**, a study made not by people primarily concerned about religion but by the business world. The 231 priests who responded do give some limited composite picture of motives for leaving, average age, current employment picture, and so on, but the survey questionnaire was too brief to be of significant value. Also the questionnaire was oriented towards the business world, namely, the manpower resource on an executive level that the former priest brings to business.

### Study Sponsored by U.S. Bishops

The National Conference of United States Bishops voted two years ago to sponsor an in-depth study of priestly life and ministry. Recently two contracts have been entered into with the National Opinion Research Center of Chicago and Loyola University of Chicago. The two contracts total more than \$400,000. The former will study the priesthood in the United States from a sociological viewpoint, the latter the psychological facets. Frs. Andrew Greeley and Eugene Kennedy will be primarily responsible in their respective fields. Although not geared primarily towards the question of the former priest, the project will include, to some extent, priests who have left the active ministry.

### Bearings Research

One of the more promising studies is one being conducted out of the Chicago office of **BEARINGS FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT**. A lengthy and thorough questionnaire, intended primarily for non-functioning priests, has been developed by a group of psychologists and is currently in the hands of 700 former priests. A large number of functioning priests have been included to serve as a control group and offer a basis for comparison. Returns are arriving, but it will be some months before all the returns are in, the data processing begun, and the composite picture available.

### Basis of Paper—Experience Gained at Bearings

Due to lack of scientific data, my effort here to present a portrait of the former priest is based primarily upon experience

gained while working with BEARINGS for the past year and a half. I have been in contact with well over 200 former priests as well as many professionals—psychologists, sociologists, management consultants, career assessment people—who are concerned about and, to varying degrees, are versed with the phenomenon of priest departures.

### Former Priests and Minority Group Prejudices

Since the world of the former priest is a world largely unknown even to priests, numerous typical stereotypes and generalizations emerge. However, there are no "typicals". Each individual and his story carries with it a uniqueness and individuality. Hence to offset the danger of looking upon the non-functioning priests as a group, and predicating of the entire group aspects which are not universally true, I would like to present five brief sketches of individuals who have come to BEARINGS. For the sake of confidence, each summary has been modified and is in fact a composite picture. The sketches hopefully will indicate the variables that exist. In presenting each man's story and his decision, no judgment, positive or negative, is intended as to the wisdom or validity of that choice.

### Portrait Number One: Frank

Frank was an only child of very strict, religious, and over protective parents. Through grade school he was always known as an excellent pupil, the delight of the sisters, the most dependable server. He entered the seminary after eighth grade. His academic and personal record through the seminary gave indication of a promising and fruitful priesthood. His summers were spent quite removed from the milieu of his peers, working either for the parish or helping in a summer camp run by the diocese.

He admits moving into the priesthood sincerely but naively. His first parochial assignment brought totally new relationships and new responsibilities, both of which he loved. Among his numerous tasks was the directorship of a young people's club. He devoted himself to the group and after some time fell in

love with a young attractive member. The relationship and emotional involvement took him entirely by surprise. Frank saw a side of himself he did not know existed, found himself saying things he never said before, and was amazed at the dormant power that was concealed within him. This warm, personal, all-consuming relationship was for Frank too powerful and too beautiful to forgo. He felt no reluctance requesting laicization, for as he put it, "I was asked to make a choice between a celibate life and a married life, and in fact I was only exposed to one of the two alternatives, not fully realizing what I was promising."

If a married priesthood were allowable, that would be Frank's first choice. However, presently he is working as a counsellor in an employment agency and trying to build a new life in a new world and finding the many adjustments almost insurmountable.

### Portrait Number Two: Jack

Jack was an athletic, masculine, energetic type. His first appointment brought him to a suburban parish working under a pastor with a serious alcoholic problem. Jack worked diligently and vigorously. Since he had to assume most of the parochial obligations, he never seemed to have a moment free. The warm response of the people served as a great incentive. However, gradually the situation began to wear on him. With little dialog in the rectory and not much time to seek out the former seminary gang, the isolation of the situation grew extremely burdensome. A bit fearful of establishing close personal ties with his parishioners, Jack decided to request a transfer.

A new assignment came and with it, a new environment and a totally different set of challenges and problems. The pastor did not allow any contact on a personal basis with parishioners outside of religious instruction classes, parish organizations, and confessions. All appointments had to be cleared with the pastor; all incoming phone calls recorded and their nature explained. Visiting the homes of parishioners, or fraternizing with people before or after mass was not permitted.

Jack lived with this situation for three years, hoping each year for a transfer, yet hesitant to ask for one, lest it would appear that he was simply a disgruntled priest with an authority problem.

Finally in the middle of the fourth year in the parish he approached the bishop, but was told that his change would come after he finished his five-year tenure as assistant.

Two months later Jack sent a letter repeating his request for a transfer or permission to look for another bishop. When a rather harsh letter was returned, Jack simply sent a letter of resignation to the bishop and left the parish. He turned bitter towards the church in general, and church authorities in particular. He is currently active in the underground church and continues to offer the Eucharist occasionally. He sees no theological reality in excommunication or laicization, but is processing his papers primarily to please his parents.

### Portrait Number Three: Peter

Peter was a religious who worked with migrants in the West through most of his priestly life. He ran into conflicts with his religious superior who insisted that his priests were to be "priests, and not social workers" and were not to participate in social causes or co-operate with public or private agencies or programs. But his people needed food and clothing.

Since Peter was unable to receive sufficient help from Catholic Charities, he pursued numerous avenues—press coverage, private groups and agencies, state and federal programs—explaining the need and seeking assistance.

For his disobedience he was removed from his work and sent to a suburban parish in a different area. He was instructed not to get involved in social action and not upset the sensitivities of whites relative to the racial issue and minority groups. This alternative he felt he could not accept, and left on a leave of absence.

He found his way to our office. We were able to find him lodging and employment, but his heart was in the priesthood and his work for the poor.

Fortunately, he was able to find a bishop in another part of the country who looked upon his situation favorably. Peter is currently functioning as a priest, continuing his work with minority groups, and is very pleased with the present situation.



## Portrait Number Four: Jim

A diocesan priest from the East—a personable, outgoing, articulate, loving, sincere person. Jim came to us with no bitterness towards or frustration with his priestly work, his superiors, or any of the other usual problem areas. His parish was alive and vibrant; the community of priests worked together marvelously well. Jim insisted that his decision was simply a matter of celibacy.

Prior to ordination the celibacy obligation worried him. With the encouragement of his spiritual directors that the grace of ordination and his own spirit of dedication would prevent this from becoming a serious problem, he went ahead. However, through two and a half years of priestly ministry, Jim found himself falling into one involvement after another. His relationships externally were amazingly platonic, but the internal turmoil was more than he felt he could bear.

During the past few months prior to his leaving the priesthood, he was counselling a young wife whose marriage was near the breaking point. By imperceptible steps the two found themselves falling in love. When the woman suggested that she wanted to leave her husband and marry him, Jim was totally shaken, particularly because he felt deeply inclined to follow through on the suggestion. Realizing that he was causing division and not stability to the marriage, he confronted her with the situation, referred her to another priest, and went to his bishop. Convinced that a change of appointment would not solve the basic problem, he requested a leave of absence for a year to assess the situation from a distance. Very much socially oriented, Jim is now working with the poverty program. He misses the old clergy gatherings and discussions, suffers the anxiety of a family deeply disappointed, misses the status and work that was his, but presently plans to remain in the lay world.

## Portrait Number Five: Bill

Bill entered a religious seminary after graduating from a public high school. His ordination found him filled with idealism and enthusiasm of saving the world for Christ.

The early years of his priesthood were spent as a roving street preacher in the south. After a few years, teachers were needed in one of the seminaries of the order. Conditioned in a spirit of making oneself available to the needs of the church and the order, he volunteered to teach. While teaching he also entered graduate school on a part-time basis to work towards a masters in his field. When he was nearing the completion of his masters, his Order took on the responsibility for a mission in Latin America. Again the request went out for volunteers and again Bill volunteered.

Troubled by the social inequities, especially the poor distribution of wealth, his strong voice rang out in public and private. This alienated him from the more wealthy parishioners and some clergy. Pressure was brought upon the bishop who finally acquiesced and requested his recall. Bill returned to the states a broken man. The life he prepared for and dedicated himself to was gone. The age of the street preacher was past; his ability to teach was hampered by a lack of degree; no longer did he desire to return to school.

Added to this, the general changes in the church and developments in theology caught him by surprise. Although open to what was happening, he felt uncomfortable and lacked control of current theology.

He approached his superior requesting a leave, and came to us in a very confused state of mind—not sure where he was going to go, what he was going to do, whether to leave permanently or return to the priesthood. Seeking a job with little pressure and emotional strain, he took a temporary job in light industry. Where he will go from here is still unresolved.

These five sketches indicate to some extent the individuality of the decision to make this traumatic switch to a new life style. Countless examples could be added, and each would have its own particular nuance. Every person reaches the crisis point in a slightly different way.

### Why Priests Leave

The constant question raised during a discussion of priest departures is the question "why." It is impossible to generalize

about a group whose backgrounds, attitudes, motivations, and individual circumstances are subject to so many variables. Personal experience and the accumulated experience of the staff convinces one that the answers defy simplification.

The usual conflict areas of clerical celibacy, misuse of authority, legalism in liturgy, over institutionalism, lack of collegiality, the feeling of emasculation are frequently the stated reasons. However, most stated reasons are likely symptoms, not causes—symptoms of much deeper factors which the individual himself does not fully perceive.

Seldom when a priest is at the point of departure, does he isolate one single factor as *the* motive for his decision. Almost inevitably it is a composite of many parts. Occasionally celibacy is singled out as the one and only cause. But even here one wonders if the case is so simple. Often after pursuing the point, one learns that the religious house or rectory was a house with little conversation, without sharing, and extremely isolating. Fulfillment of the human needs had to be sought elsewhere. The step from here to finding someone who “understands” is a small step.

The departing priest seldom unravels his story in an abstract, methodical manner. The story is concrete, vivid, and often highly emotionally charged, indicating that the compelling motives are frightfully strong, but probably not clearly understood.

Recently a priest from the Midwest distributed an “*Apologia Pro Vita Mea*” to the priests of his diocese. His statement of his reason for leaving which was also printed in the daily press, serves as a good example of multiple factors. It indicates the sincere spirit that usually pervades the men who leave, the frustrations experienced, the deeply emotional crisis reached, and the fact that no single factor emerges as “the reason” why the individual left. His letter reads as follows:

Dear Priests of the People of God:

After much thought, counsel, and prayer, much time and pain, I have petitioned our Bishop to accept my resignation from the priestly state and initiate the process of laicization. This was not a snap decision.

Some of the reasons moving me are as follows:

My action is a personal one-man vote for optional celibacy. To

me, far more important than marriage or wife-substitutes, celibacy and/or man-woman relationships, which sometimes are no more than labels, is a reality of a self-giving and honest man-woman relationship, regardless of the degree.

I find the priestly life suffocating under a blanket of strictures and old life-styles which prevent personal development and growth and keep a man immature, robbing priests of their basic freedom to take their lives into their own hands. By this I mean such things as: rectory living, assistant roles, job choices, limitations on personal initiative and expression of personal conviction, dress, collegiality, due process.

I find the liturgical service to the People of God more ritualistic than meaningful, with no liberty for creativity—personal or communal.

I find most examples of priestly involvement too parochial, provincial, and theologically narrow in view. Again, the limited freedom we do have to move the mountain of ecclesial structure, to really serve the People of God in the fullest meaning of that term, usually ends in chains.

I sense the gap that exists between priests who are theologically dead, not really knowing where the People of God are, unable to evoke from a community a "yes God" response, and, on the other hand, theologically-alive priests, priests with vision, who are looked upon as "kooks", "untrustworthy", "losing their faith", "way-out", "heretical", "rocking the boat", "disloyal".

To sink a classic: "When a priest leaves, it's either punch or Judy". It is not punch, though thank God for its sometimes-needed pain-killing quality. And, you have my word, there is no Judy, a one-special somebody, at this time as much as I wish there were, and am hoping there will be someday.

So dear priests, see through my errors, if there be any; but accept the truth which is there. Be priests of the risen Lord who lives life in you, with you, and through you!

Thank you for counting me once among you; count me always with you!

Sincerely yours in Him,

Instead of attempting to analyze motives for departures, it may be less satisfying but more objective to simply indicate what the priests are saying, to look at the questions the priests are raising, and leave the evaluation of these comments to the professionals in human behavior and motivation.



The questions and issues the priests are raising can be divided into numerous areas. Here we shall divide them into five.

### Personal Inquiries

The first area might be called the *personal* inquiries priests are making. More and more they are asking the human questions, wondering about the personal investment they have made in the priesthood. They are asking about a sense of accomplishment within their own ministry, something that is common to other men in other professions. They ask whether there is sufficient freedom and autonomy within current ministry, whether true responsibility and proper accountability exists in their apostolates. There is the desire to be one's own man, to take charge of life's activity, to determine one's own future, with all the risk and uncertainty this entails. More and more the priests want to be accepted or rejected because of what they are as persons, rather than on their clerical status. There is much concern about their own self-esteem as men, as professional men. Does the total security, the privileged position, the restrictions placed on priestly conduct and apostolates allow for the development of the truly human and complete person the priest ought to be? Does the priesthood as it is lived assist or at least allow the personal growth and personal integrity required to be truly responsible, mature, Christian? In other words, many men are asking whether the basic human needs can be fulfilled in the current structure of priestly life.

### Inter-Personal Inquiry

A second type of question, closely related, might be called the interpersonal. Today men who are ministers of the word of love to men are asking if they themselves are agents of this type of love, if they have the type of relationships that allows them to love and to be loved, so they can be truly witnesses of this primary message of Christ. Many of the men, both those who have left and those within the active ministry have brought this question to the foreground—the question of the married and unmarried clergy and its relation to the ultimate mission of Christ in our world. According to THE GALLAGHER PRESI-

DENTS' REPORT, 73.20/o of the priests who left indicated celibacy as the major influence in departures from the active ministry.

### Occupational Inquiries

Question three is occupational and vocational. More and more apostolates are questioned. Are they valid and relevant? Priests ask whether the traditional apostolates are serving primarily people or the institution, and whether the Christian message is really making an impact on society. Many priests look upon the traditional ministries as vestigial remains of a rural society and ghetto mentality, serving almost exclusively those who come, busy with "saving the saved." The feeling is that the Church is too structured and/or too fearful of change to meet the diverse needs of a changing society, and too slow to respond to the social implications of the Gospel message. There is the frustration with traditional parish ministries—children's confessions, phone duty, legalities and paper work surrounding marriages, ministering to organizations that have lost their vitality and purpose. Many men feel that greater opportunities for service to mankind can be found outside the institutionalized priesthood. Basically the priests are asking, "How much does my effort aid in building up the Body of Christ?"

On numerous occasions I have been told, "If I could be involved in work such as yours, I wouldn't leave." Whether true or not, this type of observation indicates a frustration on an occupational level.

### Institutionalism

The fourth type of question is that of the institution. You might call it the Charles Davis question—whether or not this institution which we know the church to be at the present time, is capable of effectively witnessing the gospel of love, the gospel of resurrection which we stand for in ministry. Few priests share with Charles Davis the total rejection of the Catholic Church's claim to credibility. However, in varying degrees his views are shared by many. The commonly heard distinction between the "structure" and the "church" is an echo of this thinking. The

cry against institutionalism covers a broad spectrum—various forms of authoritarianism or impersonalism, rigidity relative to liturgy and new forms of ministry, pre-occupation with legal procedures and countless other areas.

Related to the credibility question are the conflicts in the ethical or theological areas, particularly such issues as birth control and divorce.

## Identity Crisis

Finally there is the complex and diverse question of the identity crisis of the priest as he is caught up in a changing world, with a changing church, a changing theology, and a changing priesthood.

Since Vatican II the priest sees the position of both bishops and laity elevated to a new role of prominence. Flanked by a powerful episcopacy on the one side and an independent and outspoken laity on the other, his position has become more nebulous. Yet it is the priest more than anyone upon whom the life of the Church lives or dies.

The priest sees many of his former functions now handled, often more successfully, by others. Social agencies care for the poor more effectively than he; counsellors often possess greater competence than he; trained economists are better equipped to handle parish finances; his school runs more smoothly under the direction of a qualified school administrator.

It is not that the priest wishes to change this trend, but he does wonder, "What ought I to be or to do as a priest? What am I essentially, functionally? What besides the sacramental powers singles out my vocation as unique, constructive, important enough to prefer to other life choices? What is so important in it to require a special profession, a lengthy preparation, a special dress and way of life?

The upheaval in the theological, scriptural, and moral realm brings an added insecurity. Many priests sense a conflict between the "consensus of theologians" and the "consensus of bishops". Even among the bishops, varying viewpoints emerge. Birth control is a case in point. Often trained to a world of absolutes, to a static and well defined theology, what the priest now reads

and hears threatens his professional competency. Much of what he learned, accepted, and preached as absolute is now questioned or rejected. Caught up in this turmoil he wonders, "What is catholic teaching? Who, what, where is the magisterium?"

The identity problem is further increased by the current pre-eminence given to the vertical dimension of Christian ministry. The priest may admit that the God-I theology of the past lead to a spirit of escapism and uninvolvedness, of closing ones eyes to suffering humanity. The priest may be willing to live in closer contact with the secular world to meet the human needs of God's People. But as he makes this switch he wonders what qualifies him for his task to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and what differentiates himself from a social worker or other dedicated lay person. He realizes that his main concern must be in assisting the human person establish relationships with the ultimate person who gives meaning and direction to life. Feeling either unsuccessful or unable or unsure just what this means, or how to accomplish it, the priest faces a type of identity and professional crisis. Unable to resolve this within himself, it is easy to simply move away from it all.

### Needs of Priests Who Leave

The observations thus far, relative to what priests are saying as they move away from the ministry have been stated rather coldly and impassionately. These abstractions hardly indicate the personal turmoil, the deep hurt, the fantastic need of the person at this crisis point—occurring at a time that is usually the most productive period of a man's life.

The needs that a former priest faces as he moves into a totally new and totally different world read like a litany. The emotional stability of the most mature is put to the severest of tests. The life switch he faces touches every aspect of his existence. The pain he causes parents, friends, and people he served, and the realization that few will understand or accept his decision weighs heavily. He knows that many, including his friends, clerical and lay, will judge him harshly. He fears that those he served will now question his advice, doubt his sincerity, and discredit his work.



A sense of guilt often accompanies the move, even though a person may have reached such an emotional state that continuing in his role was virtually impossible. Psychological difficulties can easily emerge with the decision to terminate a life no longer considered viable.

The fear of whether or not he can "make it" in the lay world, whether or not the second effort to find a new life role will be successful, brings with it its own fear and anxiety.

Every person goes through adjustments and transitions, perhaps a major job change, loss of health, relocation of family, death of a loved one. But no adjustment in life is so complete and so dramatic as this move from total security to total insecurity. For this decision touches every aspect of his life—an almost complete break in the continuity of his life pattern relative to himself, his peers, his job, society, the Church.

Combined with these anxieties, many people move into the lay world conditioned in a spirit of self-depreciation, possessing a low self-image and an attitude of "Oh Lord I am not worthy".

New friends and social relationships must be developed. A new social life needs to be built. He must now relate to the community in a different way, becoming one of the group instead of being recognized, identified, or assuming the leader figure.

Even though the priest may have been successful in his ministry, he is terribly frightened, not sure of his potential, and wonders what in his background of knowledge and experience is saleable in the commercial world.

His most marketable ability, that of a person gifted with a high proficiency of human relation skills, is a commodity he does not know how to market.

A priest is usually over educated and under experienced for most attractive secular jobs. Teaching would seem to be a logical choice. However, most frequently the individual lacks sufficient credits in fields other than philosophy and theology, or lacks a degree from an accredited college, or has insufficient education credits to attain state certification.

The job objectives of most priests are extremely vague. Over 50% of the priests surveyed in THE GALLAGHER PRESIDENTS' REPORT stated that their major obstacle to employ-

ment was not lack of confidence, or prejudice on the part of the employer, or even lack of sufficient experience in the field, but the lack of a clearly defined job objective. Over and over again we hear, "I would like a job where I can work with people." One is tempted to respond, "With whom else do you think you would work?" A person with a clerical background can understand this priest's remark, but it will sound rather ridiculous to a placement supervisor or personnel manager.

A legion of immediate practical needs face the former priests—clothes, money, insurance, often a car. Particularly he needs assistance in terms of employment—clarifying a job objective, transferring a clerical background into marketable terminology, preparing a resume, learning how to contact potential employers and how to handle the interview.

More than anything though, the priest needs someone who is deeply interested, not in a paternalistic way or only in terms of "we'd like you to come back", but by simply fulfilling the basic needs that this human being faces at this crisis point in his life.

## The Christian Response

What is the Christian response to these needs? As individuals? As a community? As a member of the total Christian Body?

In the past those who left the ranks of the priesthood were deemed either sick or sinful, and their numbers were sufficiently small as not to be devastating or threatening. The "defection" was seen simply as a personal tragedy due to loss of zeal, lack of prayer, a worldly attitude or weakness of will. We felt content praying for the "derelict" priest so that he might respond to God's grace and make reparation for the failure.

A relatively new dimension in the current resignation of priests is the number of highly gifted, theologically learned, socially aware, and morally committed who are leaving the priesthood. Often they are men very successful in their work, with good relationships towards their colleagues and people they served. Currently many hold responsible positions in the secular world and live as dedicated laymen.

Another facet is the variety in the men leaving. In our work at BEARINGS we have seen the total spectrum relative to age,

temperament, background, ministry. Our clients include chancery people and religious higher superiors, pastors and assistants, missionaries, both home and abroad, theology professors, high school teachers, college administrators, novice masters, vocational directors, chaplains, people with a PhD and those with no degree, strong self-starters and highly dependent people, the emotionally stable and unstable.

We see most of these men, after the original trauma in early transition, become highly successful and happy in their new life role. Few wish to return to the priesthood they left (though many would wish to function if the priesthood were structured differently). They move into extremely varying and important positions. We see them rise quickly in business and hear the requests from employers for more men of this caliber. Many live with a deep spirit of dedication, and look upon their role as a new mode of living their priesthood. All of this is cause for reflection and re-evaluation—for each of us as individuals, for the religious communities and dioceses, for the Church as a whole.

How does one respond to this phenomenon? The following thoughts, admittedly subjective, are worthy I feel of consideration and discussion. It seems there are three distinct areas that demand a response.

### Personal Level

On a personal level—how each of us responds to former priests who are personal acquaintances. Most basic is the attitude we have towards them. My suggestions are these: that the strongly judgmental, triumphalistic, or paternalistic attitude of the past remain past; that we assume good faith and honesty rather than the opposite; that the decision be accepted as best for the individual and the Church; that the hand be ready to help implement the new life choice; and above all, that the person be treated with at least the same respect, love, and concern that we treat any other Christian. This means as a minimum that such a person is entitled to our understanding, help, and friendship—that we see him as a person with whom we have strong theological and human ties. The recommendation made by the synod of the Detroit Diocese bears reflection: "Charity dictates that priests who decide

to return to the lay state be accepted with every kindness and consideration and with gratitude for the gift of whatever length of service they gave to the Christian Community."

These attitudes transferred into action touch multitudinous fronts. It may mean giving financial aid or expediting a laicization process, making a phone call when we are nearby or welcoming a person back to the parish or religious family for a gathering. It may mean keeping in contact through a Diocesan Newsletter or inviting the priest to meet with or address the Priest Senate. It may mean simply asking a person out for dinner. It does mean above all that the person be treated with dignity and respect.

### Community Response

A second area challenges the community to respond in terms of an organized program of services to meet the numerous and diverse needs at the point of departure. The positive or negative attitudes of former priests towards himself, towards society, towards the Church are highly conditioned by the type of treatment shown at this crisis point. The moment when above all we ought to be a brother to fellow priests, it is at the critical point of separation. It is extremely easy for these men to feel, once they have decided to leave the active ministry, that the Church doesn't really care about them. But to effectively meet the many needs, an organized and well structured program of services is necessary. Organizations like BEARINGS FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT, NEXT STEP, and CONTACT deserve our moral and financial support.

The services needed which these organizations try to meet include the following: personal and vocational counselling, psychological and aptitude testing and evaluation, temporary and short term housing assistance, job consultation and resume drafting, employment leads and contacts, group meetings and seminars to meet monetary, social, or psychological needs, referral assistance, social gatherings that provide an atmosphere of acceptance as well as an opportunity to make new acquaintances, a base with which the person can identify until he has gained security in himself, his job, his new life role.



## The Church's Response

Finally, on a broader scale the Church, particularly those in authority, are challenged by the current trend. Many of the questions raised earlier can and should be discussed by priests, and studied by theologians on a speculative and practical level. Many of the issues however, touch on current structuring of priestly life and hence lie in the domain of higher superiors. Yet, before proper decisions can be reached, our concern, study, recommendations, (and at times, perhaps prodding) are invaluable.

Without enunciating many specifics, my suggestion is that all, especially those who have a role of influence or decision making in the Church, address themselves directly, without prior conclusions, to the major issues in the current priest crisis. This would include areas like clerical celibacy, a part-time clergy, laicization procedures, various styles of priestly life, and varying forms of ministry.

Personally it seems unrealistic to believe that any simple solution, such as optional celibacy, will solve the morale problem that sweeps through much of the clergy. But equally unrealistic is the attitude that "if we leave matters alone, soon all will settle down and everything will get back to normal." It seems obvious that the current trend cannot long continue without great detriment to the entire People of God. Hence honesty, openness and courage to face the issues is mandatory.

My fellow priests, these are some thoughts, impressions, suggestions regarding priest departures. They are the observations, not of a theologian or psychologist or expert on priestly life and ministry, but those of a priest who has worked closely with men who have shared our enthusiasm for the priesthood, who are bound to us by the bond of ordination, but who have found frustration and disillusionment in their role. Hopefully these thoughts will prompt your thoughts which in turn will lead to the renewing of a priesthood pleasing both to God and to Man.

## FRANCISCAN AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

LOUIS VITALE, O.F.M.

### The Crisis of Today

The world is going through technological and social change of a degree and pace never experienced before. Such a disruption of our known world is disturbing to the institutions and people of our society. The Church and the Franciscan Order naturally share in this chaos (one need only note the drop-out, decline in vocations, and disaffection within the Church and the Order). Whether we as Franciscans can survive and remain—or once again become—vital, depends on our ability to adapt to the changing world and be meaningful within it. Spokesmen for the contemporary scene such as Dr. Martin Marty<sup>1</sup> indicate to us that we can be extremely relevant.

The noted church historian has postulated that enthusiasts of the present day look to the past for inspiring models. Though perhaps dissenting from recent tradition they search the past for new heroes and models and make creative use of them in fashioning a future. Perhaps none have caught the eye of these historical searchers as has Francis of Assisi. His spirit and life-style are of great appeal today. He shines with a modern radiance. Unfortunately, many modern critics so enamoured of Francis do not always see his charism in us. It would seem that the Spirit is speaking through them as well as through Vatican II when we are told to revitalize our Franciscan charism, reevaluate our life-style and give forth an authentic Franciscan witness as a model for the "new age." Thus the renewal that the Spirit calls us today is one that maintains real loyalty to our authentic Franciscan origin, as well as speaking meaningfully to the yearning of modern man.

### Themes of Modern Man

Modern man is searching to find a human life in the secular

world. Any movement that is meaningful to him must have a humanistic orientation and be genuinely related to the secular city. Few men have been more conscious of human values than Francis, and we will suggest that his unique charism was to bring this into the life of the newly developing secular city. The Fathers of Vatican II also were aware that the Spirit speaks to the Church today through the conditions and mentality of contemporary society. Thus in their Pastoral Constitution on "The Church in the Modern World" they use as guidelines for renewal the humanistic and secular oriented themes held in high regard by man today. We might review these themes in appraising our Franciscan relevance.

A. THE DIGNITY OF MAN AND THE EXCELLENCE OF LIBERTY. When we listen to modern man we hear a great concern that the value of each individual be recognized, that his right to life and to develop his unique person to its fullness be respected. There is a genuine spirit of anti-conformism that is a cry for the freedom to be creative, to use initiative, to be oneself, and through all this to find basic human values and the genuine meaning of life. This calls man to personal responsibility for his life and that of his fellow-man. We see this conscience actualized in the alert response of the many in their service to mankind, witness the success of the Peace Corps, Vista, Pavla. This recognition of and concern for the rights of every individual adamantly rejects any trace of discrimination and demands the full participation of all in the decision-making of society. Poverty and powerlessness are the villains whose demise is considered imperative. Together with this is a new emphasis on the life of the spirit, to rise above the excessive materialism of our age. There is even a new search for mysticism, transcending man's technologically created world. The hope of this striving and searching is that man can do more than accomplish tasks, that he can find joy, happiness, peace, and love in his life. The American Bishops' recent pastoral on "Human Life in Our Day" notes that these humanistic concerns are common to the Christian and the avowed humanist, that they are God-given rights. We might consider the cry of our day for human rights and dignity the "groaning of the Spirit" within the sons of God.

What movement responds any more naturally to these concerns than does Franciscanism? No humanist of today is more conscious of the dignity of man, the capstone of God's magnificent creation. Cajetan Esser<sup>2</sup> notes that Francis' spirituality focuses on the originality of creation and encourages utmost liberty for the development of the individual. This was reflected in the fraternity he founded. He treated every brother with the utmost respect and concern. The letter he wrote to Brother Leo reflects his encouragement to the friars to take individual responsibility in their lives and tasks.<sup>3</sup> Democracy was institutionalized in the Franciscan Order. It was not set up as a hierarchy, but as an interrelationship of persons, all represented through chapters and united through the servants of the brethren, the ministers.<sup>4</sup> He rejected any discrimination among men as ardently as any civil rights activist. As we all know, the poor, the under-privileged were so much his concern that he chose radical poverty and identified himself with their every need and care. Those who are dedicated to the struggles for the good of their fellowman could find no better model than he who removed (in his case through selecting voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience) any possible hindrance to his absolute service to his fellow creature.

Dr. Erich Fromm has postulated that materialism is a crucial factor in the great incidence of violence in our society. The eminent philosopher sees a critical need for a return to spiritual values.<sup>5</sup> Francis is ever a model of one who broke through the slavery to materialism. Even Pope Paul has today recalled to us the anti-conformism of Franciscanism, never a slave to the artificialism of society, ever urging authenticity and personalism.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the generation that is eager to realize the more expressive life of man rather than just the task-master is inspired by the joy, mirth, gaiety, carefreeness, and spontaneity of their chosen hero. Even in their new search for mysticism they find no better guide.

**B. UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.** The values and goals we have been discussing are not realized in a vacuum. Man is newly aware of himself as a social being. Modern science tells us that we need others for our very identity.<sup>7</sup> The self is postulated by the love and recognition received from others. Yet modern man finds himself in a great state of isolation and alienation in the modern



world. Fraternity, a community of mankind, has become the essential ingredient for continued human existence. We note this yearning in the surge of new attempts at togetherness such as Cursillos, sensitivity sessions, communes, dialogue groups, the Better World Movement, and the like. The Bishops of the U.S. and of Canada have recently reiterated contemporary writers in stressing the need for genuine community within the family and within society. Particularly they tell North America that it cannot exist in isolation. Extreme nationalism is no longer viable. The American Bishops have deplored the lack of concern for promoting the international common good, indicated by the fickleness of support for foreign aid. The Canadian Bishops called upon the United Nations "to consider seriously the launching of a thorough study of the evolving concepts of sovereignty in modern times so that Biafra and Czechoslovakia (and other in similar situations) can turn to the United Nations and may be able to receive more creative and nuanced help."<sup>8</sup> The social scientist and the Christian are now aware that man needs desperately his neighbor and that the neighborhood has spread to every corner of the world.

Again the Franciscan movement was paradigmatic for brotherhood. Much aware of the family of man, he was eager to give the world a model of men living together in mutual, intimate love. No modern philosophy of community can best fit the words of Francis encouraging the brothers to be at the service of one another, sharing every need, joy, grief, even anticipating the desires of each other. But this was no in-group for Francis. The very *raison d'être* of the Order was to enable them to go forth bringing brotherhood to all men. The adventurous spirit of the early brothers demonstrated a new far-reaching thrust for the Christian world. Their recognition of Asiatics on the other side of the world as their brothers and their attempts to embrace them as such are a much needed model for Americans today.

C. PEACE. The world is aware that it is doomed if it cannot find non-violent resolutions to its conflicts. The younger generation born under the bomb feels it is futile to attempt a meaningful life. Many in their hopelessness have turned to escapes, others are making a last desperate protest to lift the cloud of violence over their heads and heal the chasms in their society. The recent

elections in the United States brought to the fore America's realization that its first concern must be to restore peace to the world and to its own streets.

Those enamoured of peace take Francis as their patron. Celano notes that "Peace was so loved by Francis and his brethren that his Order might be called a delegation of Peace."<sup>9</sup> His peace prayer is looked to as the ideal formula for peace echoed throughout the world at such moments of intense concern as the funeral of Peace Prize winner Martin Luther King, Jr. Even the pragmatic minded can look to Francis' success in bringing peace to his strife-torn land.

D. SOCIAL CHANGE. The search for dignity, brotherhood, and peace are particularly problematic in light of the current condition of the world. Technological change has intensified the problems of the world. There is an increasing tension between those nations that have developed to an extreme degree and underdeveloped "third world." The pile-up in cities is also a phenomenon of our technological age. Social scientists are tabulating the alienation, segregation, cultural loss, and deprivation that highlight our urban crisis.<sup>10</sup> And hanging over all is the threat of nuclear extinction, which Dr. Fromm calls the ultimate symbol of man's subservience to his own creation.<sup>11</sup> A world that has seen Dachau, Hiroshima, and now Vietnam with the accompanying threat of all-out nuclear war, finds itself given to hopelessness. As Dr. Marty noted,<sup>12</sup> the world today is intolerable and many are rebelling in search for a viable human existence. The world has changed, but much more change is necessary. The superstructure itself needs transformation. It is recognized that institutions are necessary in order to affect society, but not to the extent that they suppress individual initiative. The highly renowned theory of Max Weber states that the charismatic is ever routinized into bureaucracies.<sup>13</sup> Men today feel that creativity and freedom are stifled by over-institutionalization and so the urge is to revive the charismatic. This has resulted in greater tensions between order and initiative, freedom and authority, creativity and the accomplishment of tasks. Many see the changes that have occurred in our society as the unfolding of God's plan. But even if one does not accept this, as Pope John

noted, the change has occurred and hence the Spirit demands that the Christian recognize it and work with it.

Francis also came at a time of great social change. The superstructure was changing from the feudalistic to the city-capitalist society. Some would feel that the really unique role that Francis played in the divine drama of man was to have an intuitive vision of this new society. He carried this transformation into the structure of the Church. Thus Francis was, perhaps unwillingly, inspired to lead the change away from the monastic structure that was an integral part of the feudal system to a new form of religious life that was adapted to life in the new city. Franciscanism was a gateway through which the new city-man was incorporated into the social and ecclesiastical institutions of the day,<sup>14</sup> a role that can be extended to the integration of the underprivileged and segregated masses in today's world. Thus from its founding Franciscanism was highly mobile, responding to the needs of a society on the move. This mobility was even canonized through exemption, which freed the Order from the more structured routine of the administrative areas of the Church.<sup>15</sup> We note here again the unique universalism of Francis' charism. The Spirit did not only lead Francis to the practicing faithful, but his mission was to all men. His imaginative vision urges Franciscans into foreign lands and into critical social areas, the disadvantaged "third world," the disaffected, the derelict and alienated of our urban society, and even the new "infidels," whether they are Black Muslims, hippies, or the "new left." Even the Franciscan attitude toward work, to be performed but never at the sacrifice of the deeper needs of man, and with an eye on the good accomplished rather than remuneration given, might provide guidelines to a world that must find meaning in its work and, perhaps even more important, understand how to use its ever-increasing leisure to enhance the life of each man and of his world. The complexities themselves of modern living may frighten man. But Francis' trust in creation and all man does in God's providence brings a confidence that again makes the Franciscan message pertinent today. Francis would see God's face shine in every hubcap, hear his breath in the roar of machines and jet planes, and

praise God for every good development of twentieth century living.

### Our Relevance Today

Beginning particularly with the Vatican Council II the Spirit is leading a renewal in the Church that seeks to bring the Church into closer consonance with the world of today. This same Spirit of renewal is active in the Franciscan Order. It would seem that it finds in us a particularly apt vehicle for relating to the modern world. Pope Paul recalled to us the image of Francis rebuilding the Church in his own age.<sup>16</sup> Thus the particular charism given by the spirit to Francis to found a movement *a propos* to a new society, would beckon us to the same task today. The close correlation between the charism of our Order and the contemporary concerns with humanism, brotherhood, peace, and a changing society indicates that Franciscanism is highly relevant to the contemporary scene. Thus in this new age the Spirit demands of us that we reassess our charism, sharpen our vision and our image, engage the world in a true, contemporary, spirit of Francis. We are proud of the way Friars have responded to this task in the past. But Francis urged us to ever say "up 'till now we have done nothing." In light of the new demands of a changed world, and particularly noting the increasing shortages in manpower and resources, we must re-evaluate our every operation. Much of what we are and do is vital and should be reaffirmed. Some must be revised or eliminated in our drive for greater efficiency and effectiveness in our mission. Another look at the concerns of man today can indicate the directions in which we can focus our resources that are particularly characteristic of Franciscanism.

A. DIGNITY OF MAN AND THE EXCELLENCE OF LIBERTY. A radical renewal of our Gospel-values will make us even more conscious of the values necessary for our society today. The dignity and brotherhood of man, the human rights of all, the search for individual liberty and every opportunity for development are at the core of the Gospel message. If we are to respond to the demands of our founder and our own generation that we be authentic in our life, we must reaffirm these values in every aspect of our society. We know that certain segments of our population are



fighting to find their God-given dignity. We must join the Black man as he says "Black is beautiful." Our faith tells us he is right. But this is more than a slogan. The Black people, Indians, Mexican-Americans and other minority groups must be given full recognition, a full share of this society's goods, and full participation in the decision-making and governing processes of our countries. We cannot simply acknowledge this, this message must be brought to the white majority, in the pulpit, the mass media, and through every vehicle we can devise. Friars should be active in every aspect of the civil rights struggle to obtain fair housing laws, equal employment opportunities, integrated education, and full suffrage. We are in a unique position to bridge the gap between the elements in society. Franciscans are involved with minority groups and in many cases have unusual access to their confidences; on the other side we have many opportunities to influence the conscience of the dominant group (for example, in our retreat houses). Every effort must be made through education, support, activism, communication, and resources to heal the rents in the body of Christ.

The poor are of a particular concern for Franciscans. Francis, sensitive to Christ's predilection for the poor, desired ardently to share their station in life. He knew that effective poverty liberated man from slavery to hindrances. Freedom from slavery to "things" is highly valued today, and nothing edifies modern man more than to see some give all (in a radical pouring out) for the service of their fellowman. Thus Franciscans are called to identify with the poor, to become truly free, creative sons of God. This will necessitate courageous experiments in poverty, actually living and working with the poor in mission fields, ghettos, the rural poverty belts, etc.) as well as sharpening our regular life. This freely putting ourselves (not by force of law) but in a genuine spirit of giving) into the world of the poor will inevitably lead us to greater social consciousness. For the dignity of man demands a freedom from slavery to things, but also demands sufficient things to lead a full existence. Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, conscious of this crucial need of the majority of the world's people have called the Church the "Church of the Poor." Who can better help the Church to attain this reality than those who share their

life? Many argue that the rich need the gospel message also. This is true, and when we are associated with them we should endeavor to bring it to them. But many seem willing to work with the rich. There seems no doubt when one studies the spirit of Francis and his Order that our special charism is to identify with the little people (*the minores*). Since these are the majority of the world, and since so few are concerned with them, we must ask, if we don't serve them, who will? We note with enthusiasm the many works of practical charity performed by Franciscans. We can take pride in being called the "soup kitchen boys." It would seem most Franciscan to continue and increase our service of the indigent and needy, to make our presence felt on skid-row and in the severe poverty pockets of our countries. The dignity of the poor demands that they are not only given hand outs in need but helped to help themselves. Franciscans can be most helpful in lending their skills in organizing credit unions, training programs, education, and other community programs. To identify with the poor means to identify with them in their struggles to gain social justice. Today we see Franciscans working with the farm worker's movement and other unorganized workers at the bottom of the labor market, slum residents, disadvantaged youths, and other "second class citizens" to obtain their rights and rightful places in our society. This area of activity cannot help but have a high priority demand in our activity and resources. The universal vision of Francis would give Franciscans today a key role in sensitizing North American to the needs of the "third world," the poor of Biafra and other have-not nations. Our Bishops in their recent statements have assumed new responsibility to take effective action and to speak out concerning these crucial areas of concern.<sup>17</sup> Franciscans would seem ideal heralds to their cry. Finally, Franciscans would address themselves to the spiritual poverty of our countrymen so blinded and crippled by material things that they are dead to life of the spirit. Celebration would be a needed ingredient Franciscans can restore to society. Liturgy, writing, and other areas of mass communication might be just some of the channels by which the joy and spontaneity of Francis might be injected into our society. The font of mysticism in our history might be retapped for our present generation.

B. UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. To give the world a foreshadowing of eternal union in love, and a model toward which to strive in the world necessitates that we develop the intimate brotherhood Francis speaks of so ardently. This means a real concern for each other, a genuine openness and a sharing in our whole lives. Francis broke from the monastery, his friary was the world. But every man needs a home, and the home for the brethren was to be the love of each other. Thus his emphasis on the warmth we should have toward each other when we meet and live together. Most friars are proud of the spirit of brotherhood that has marked the order but we are still some distance from the vision of fraternal love that Francis desired. More than ever today we need a renewed will-to-community. Only intimate friendship can really hold the brotherhood together, as well as make it a meaningful model for today's seekers. We may have to experiment in community living, trying new forms, ever willing to adapt the structure to persons involved. We may note today the healthy efforts of team apostolates, groups of friars (sometimes involving lay people) living as close personal community involved as a team in a parish work and various other apostolates, some even obtaining jobs to help support the world of the community (as well as give Franciscan witness to the market place.) We need the individual talents and charisms of each, yet the unique charisms of the First order is to show collective witness. Fr. General has noted<sup>18</sup> that we must strive toward a minimum of structures in favor of individual liberty and responsibility. To achieve this means strengthening our personal ties and mutual trust and cooperation. Fraternal regard would particularly reach out to the young members in training in our fraternity. Drawing them into active participation in our lives and work would give the older friars and opportunity to pass their inspiration on to the young, and the latter could have an actual awareness of the concrete life of the brotherhood. We are aware that many leaving the priesthood and religious life have felt that they 'bear one another's burdens' is still a *sine quanon* for a Christian community. No one can survive in a healthy Franciscan life unless he can count on the help and friendship of his brothers. Nor should our charity and fraternal

concern fail to reach out to those of our brothers who have left the First Order.

Certainly in a brotherhood any inequality is a contradiction. The world will reject us at the slightest sign of discrimination. There is no sociological difference within the Order. The clericalization of our Order has limited our witness. Besides, non-clerics can often reach peoples not easily approachable by our Franciscan priests. Beyond this, Franciscanism is not limited to members of the Order, our brotherhood extends to all who have the spirit of Francis. We would limit our charism if we did not include in our work and lives all who share our vision. Other groups such as the Catholic Worker, the Grail, and even secular groups may give us much of their own intuition of Francis' dream. Nor can we be afraid of immersing ourselves in the secular. Fr. Bernard Häring tells us that "Christ . . . urges us to open our eyes and praise God for all the good seen in the secular city."<sup>19</sup> Fr. Karl Rahner sends the Christian into the secular world; "humanity today in its immense numbers and in its concrete unity must learn the new, necessary forms of its society in order to love. . . . A worldly world is being created by man which is not meant to be dacralized, but must be experienced in its depths which God has sanctified." The eminent theologian rather than warning us away from the secular world and the humanist sees our vital function as entering it and taking it to its depths, reminding us that "the basic primary act of the 'worldly' man is always an act of love of neighbor. In this basic act the original love of God is realized."<sup>20</sup> The Franciscan commitment to genuine community, to openness and intimate friendship as true brothers is not limited to members of our fraternity, not to our flock, but to those we encounter in any position in life. Their concern is our concern, their love is our life.

C. PEACE. The conception of universal brotherhood is meaningless if it does not mean an absolute commitment to peace. The American Bishops' pastoral shocks us out of a complacency that might settle for prayers for peace. "But those who only pray for peace, have a defective theology concerning the relation between human action and the accomplishment of the will of God in which is our peace" (p. 36). Who more than us should hear their call?



The Bishops recount the threat to our civilization brought about by the "anti-life direction of technological warfare . . . the neutron bomb" and comment that "It would be perverse indeed if the Christian conscience were to be unconcerned or mute in the face of the multiple moral aspects of these awesome prospects" (p. 33). They recall to us the Council's condemnation of the use of weapons of mass destruction, of the arms race, the grave danger of our new commitment to an anti-ballistic system, and raise serious questions concerning the moral aspects of our involvement in Vietnam. Can we continue to carry on our tradition as a "delegate of Peace" if we do not address ourselves in every way possible to these problems? It would seem most natural to find Franciscans in every phase of the peace movement. Surely such activities should not be only a sideline tolerated for a few Franciscans. Every friar and Franciscan community should consider what real contribution it can make to the cause of peace. Our human and physical resources should be made available for this cause so critical to human life, and so characteristically a concern of Franciscanism. Franciscans recalling the first rule of Francis for the Laymen's Order "they are not to bear arms for any reason" should be the first to respond to the American Bishops' call of concern for those who object in conscience to this war (selective conscientious objection) or to war in general (pacifism or conscientious objection). Franciscans can and are assisting these men through counseling alternatives, supporting those who in conscience resist the draft, and mobilizing every resource to change the draft laws in accord with these Christian principles (particularly, as the Bishops note, in line with "A Catholic position of opposition to compulsory peacetime military service"). Finally, our commitment to peace and to universal brotherhood senses a Franciscan apostolate in the call of the Council and of these Bishops for a special vocation of men working to find ways to resolve these complex moral problems and to build up a viable and effective international community. This dedication to peace alone would make our Fraternity most highly prized in today's world.

D. SOCIAL CHANGE. In a highly fluid, rapidly changing society a great amount of flexibility and mobility is essential. As we have noted this is characteristic of Franciscanism. We have lost much of

this. We will have to strive to free ourselves more and more from firm attachments in order to be free for a changing world. We will need to be willing to give up some of our long-standing preparations to be free to direct our limited resources into the new challenges that our changing society presents us. In doing this it is necessary to respect the insights and the call of conscience of our friar-brothers. Some will not agree with the vision of others, but it must be respected. Sometimes we will join as brothers in action, at other times we will simply support the activity of another, and at times we will forego our chosen endeavor for the collective mission. But brothers can never cut one another off because one disagrees with the conscientious decisions of another, nor, as Francis urged us, should a brother cut himself off when he feels others do not understand him.<sup>21</sup> The bonds of brothers urge the acceptance of the individuality of each member. Again the Franciscan lesson to the world is the model of free individuals who can live and work together. This flexibility, searching, listening to ourselves and the world around us is the only way we can be sensitive to the Spirit speaking to us in this time of renewal. This can be the only viable stance for an Order founded as a charismatic movement.

To meet the modern world one must use its tools. We see friars giving Franciscan witness in every profession and kind of work. Mass communication is the pulpit of the world. Francis would doubtless rejoice at the vehicles Franciscans have today to herald the Good News. The Franciscan-produced "Telespots" are seen by the vast American society unreached previously by any Church effort. Other Franciscan productions and publications project our voice to the world. Follower of the Troubadour will doubtlessly continue to expand this apostolate in ever more effective ways, learning from the experts of the world of technology and reaching deep into the secular society.

The Christian ever moves ahead toward the end of God's plan for man. This is a call to dynamic activity in the world that surrounds us. Fr. Johannes Metz says "Christian eschatology must be seen as a productive and militant eschatology. Christian hope is a home in which we "have not only something to drink, but also something to cook."<sup>22</sup> The world is desperately in need of Francis'

"Instruments of hope." But it must be creative hope, man working with all his ability to create the hoped-for world. To do this one must know that world. One must be attuned to new developments in theology, psychology, sociology, and the arts to be ever relevant to our evolving world. We are aware that many today feel insecure in the face of new developments and unsure of the new theological insights and we recognize our responsibility to provide every opportunity for updating knowledge and methods. Above all friars should continually strive to re-animate their Franciscan vision. When we encounter difficulties in our way of life, we should return to our sources, try to recapture the vision and enthusiasm of Francis and share it with one another. In this way we will attain the joy and peace that is the life of those living as brothers in mutual love at the service of their fellowman and their God. If we fail in this we are doomed to virtual extinction and ineffectiveness, but if we can achieve this ideal there is little question that the dynamic force of Franciscanism will be alive in us and be an enthusiastic force in rebuilding the Church and will provide a vital inspiration for a troubled world.

We can justly consider that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Martin Marty, "The City of the Future," talk given at Canon City, Colorado, September 1968, paraphrased from lecture notes.

<sup>2</sup> Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., *The Order of St. Francis* (Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1959), p. 45 and passim.

<sup>3</sup> James Meyer, O.F.M., *The Words of Saint Francis* (Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1952), p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> "A Theological Interpretation of the General Constitutions," (Accompanying new Constitutions), Ch. VIII, a. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Erich Fromm, materialism as a cause of violence, *National Catholic Reporter*, June 7, 1968, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Pope Paul VI, "Paternal Address to the General Chapter," printed in *Osservatore Romano*, June 24, 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Modern Social Psychologists, e.g., G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939).

<sup>8</sup> American Hierarchy pastoral letter, "Human Life in Our Day," p. 39, and letter to United Nations drafted by Canadian Bishops meeting September 30, 1968.

<sup>9</sup> I Celano, 23, 24.

<sup>10</sup> A recent Harris Survey shows that 28% of adult Americans feel largely alienated from the mainstream of society. This rises to over 50% for those in deprived situations, e.g., low income Blacks.

<sup>11</sup> Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York, Fredrich Ungar Publishing Co., 1966), p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> Marty, *loc. cit.*,

<sup>13</sup> Max Weber, e.g. in Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber*, p. 327-8.

<sup>14</sup> Esser, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> "The Regular Life and the Apostolate in Modern Conditions," The General Chapter of 1963, p. 40.

"Exemption is nothing else, in fact, than the condition in which all that originates from the Holy Spirit must be able to keep itself in this direction."

(G. Martlet, S.J. "*Saintete de l'Eglise et vie religieuse*," 1964, pp. 98-99).

<sup>16</sup> Paul VI, "Paternal Address," *loc. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Bishop Emmett Carter at Press release of letter from Canadian Bishops to United Nations: "This letter constitutes a departure and new orientation of our responsibility as bishops."

<sup>18</sup> Constantine Koser, O.F.M., Press Conference, June 13, 1967.

<sup>19</sup> Bernard Häring, C.S.S.R., "The Meaning of Christian Conscience," talk given at Canon City, Colorado, September 1968.

<sup>20</sup> Karl Rahner, S.J., "The Unity of Love of God and Love of Neighbor," *Theology Digest*, XV, 2, Summer 1967, p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> Meyer, *op. cit.*, 191b.

<sup>22</sup> Johannes Metz, Lecture at University of California, Santa Barbara, Spring, 1968.



## COMMENTS ON FRANCISCAN AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

### 1. Martin Pable, O.F.M., Cap.

Father's paper is so timely and so well thought out that I really could find nothing to take serious issue with.

So I would like to take off a bit on his first point about the dignity of man and the excellence of human liberty. As he says, "... minority groups must be given full recognition, a full share of this society's goods, and full participation in the decision-making and governing processes of our countries. We cannot simply acknowledge this; this message must be brought to the white majority—in the pulpit, the mass media, and through every vehicle we can devise. Friars should be active in every aspect of the civil rights struggle. . . ."

I thoroughly agree with that. But I'd like to say a few words about the *manner* of our involvement. It's interesting that just Saturday night our local paper reported on some research done by two sociologists at Berkeley—a five year study of prejudice and religious belief in the U.S. They found that while 75-90% of Protestant and Catholic clergymen are working actively against racial discrimination, yet the majority of church members (55%) are not only prejudice, but also "deny the right of the churches to challenge their prejudice."

Now I find this highly significant. It means that with all our good will and our hard work, we are not getting through. And we have to face that reality and ask ourselves why. I realize that there are a number of reasons, but I want to single out just one. My feeling—and I have no hard evidence to prove this—but my feeling is that we use good psychology in all areas of our apostolate except this one. After all, what are we trying to do in combatting racial prejudice? Basically, we're trying to change people's *attitudes*. And what do we do when we want to change attitudes in other areas, such as changes in liturgy and in religious life, or faulty attitudes toward sex? Well, we don't blast people

over the head, we don't start out by denouncing them as lousy Christians or as phonies. No, we start out by presuming good will, we start with premises we know they will accept. And we go on to show them that if they really believe thus-and-so or have such-and-such goals, then their present attitude or behavior is inconsistent. And all the while we're careful not to just bowl them over with logic, but to be alert to the *emotional* blocks they may have, to appeal to their nobler feelings of loyalty, generosity, and their sense of fairness. This is how we win people to a better way of thinking.

But it seems that when we come to racial injustice, we forget all these dynamics. Probably it's because we're so overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude and the urgency of the problem that we lose our cool. In the same night's paper (as an example of what I mean) was the complete text of the speech Father James Groppi gave at the World Council of Churches meeting on racism. Here's part of it: "In the summer of 1967 there was violence in the city of Milwaukee. . . . The white church and the white community called it a riot. . . . But with those of us in the black community it was a revolutionary act. We did not consider this any wrongdoing. . . . Our young people walked past the parish carrying furniture and food and shouted, 'Black Power, Father.' I looked at them and said, 'Black Power, Joe—don't get caught.' " In the same speech he justified the actions of children who steal from supermarkets and youngsters who brick police cars that are harrassing them.

Now theologically he may be right: he justifies it all on the grounds of restitution for past injustices. But psychologically, I submit that this kind of rhetoric does nothing to eliminate prejudice from the hearts of people. In fact, it serves only to harden those who are already prejudiced, and to swing over to prejudice those who are still wavering. And it makes it that much harder for the white power structure to change its laws and practices so as to give black people the rights and freedoms they deserve. News analysts say this is what happened in Los Angeles last week: Mayor Yorty defeated Thomas Bradley because too many white people were simply driven by fear of black political power. It's all very well to say, "Well, if people act out of fear,

they're being irrational." Right—but if that fear is a psychological fact, our labeling it as such isn't going to change anything, unless we do something to reduce it.

So my point is: in our work for civil rights—and our role as prophet demands that we be in that struggle—I think we have to begin by taking people as they are. If they are prejudiced and bigoted, merely denouncing them as such and shaking the dust from our feet is not the answer. We have to win them over by the same kind of loving appeal that we use for the rest of the Gospel message.

## 2. Luke Stone, T.O.R.

Two months ago, I returned from our General Chapter of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis, which convened at our motherhouse in Rome, at the Basilica of Saints Cosmas and Damian. I was an elected delegate with active voice representing the Brothers from our American Province. My task was primarily to create awareness, existence, and position of the Brothers in our clerical community within the climate of the twentieth century.

As you know, from the *Decree on Religious Life, Article two*, the Religious have been asked to return, to captivate the spirit of their founder. In our case, to return to the original inspiration of Francis and to decide whether his hopes are our hopes concerning community or rather fraternity, or still a better word "brotherhood", also the minority, and the mission to preach the Gospel message acclimated in today's world.

As I read and studied Fr. Louis' paper on "Franciscanism and Contemporary Society", I could not help but reflect the many chaotic, strenuous, and fruitless hours that I patiently listened to and also actively participated during our Chapter on these very same areas. Some we lost but others we zeroed in on target especially the concept of "brotherhood" which was expressed so well in this discussion paper which you were all asked to read. Here we find that the Franciscan work not only for this brotherhood and unity among all men, but also for peace. That is why we see more but not nearly enough actively involved in peace movements from among our communities.

The FATHERHOOD OF GOD and the BROTHERHOOD

OF MEN are so essential to our FRANCISCANISM. Christ said, "In this manner . . . shall you pray: 'Our Father. . . !' (Mt. 6:9) Christ began prayer with this warmth and welcomeness that there is a Father in heaven; and he also ended it with a reminder of man's weakness to evil. Again, Francis followed this pattern to arrive at a true brotherliness.

For a successful brotherhood, charity and obedience are a sturdy foundation. Charity makes a harmonious group out of frail and impatient human beings. Obedience, as Francis would have it, is the superior commands as though he is not commanding, and the religious obey as though not obeying.

As a group then, we do have something to be proud of and that is each other. We are unique individuals, each one of us unmistakably different from others in temperament, personality, in background, and ability. In other words, we change each other and help each other to become real persons. Isn't this just what our founder, Francis, experienced?

So too then must this brotherhood extend into our apostolic witness. As Father Louis mentioned in this paper that all who share our vision from the Catholic Worker, the Grail, and even to the secular and protestant groups that give much of their own intuition of Francis' dream.

We are all living in a new era and our brotherhood must respond to it with new ways and means. The problem is today: "Can we stay caught up?" If we do not, then we shall stifle ourselves.

Our formation or training programs, superior-subject relationships, educational and apostolic endeavors, vocational procedures must reflect this brotherhood, or else we shall no longer be witnesses to a living reality, but to a period which has no relevance to our age.

If this brotherhood is frustrated, there is certainly no point continuing today. Our movement will not come from Rome but must come from the Religious. Afterall, our religious founder, Francis, was a contemporary man; we, as his followers, can be no less!



### 3. Peter Nickels, O.F.M. Conv.

On one score at least, Fr. Vitale's article leaves little room for discussion: not many Franciscans could be found who have any quarrel with the dignity of man, universal brotherhood, peace and adaptation to social change. Whether our commitment to these goals involves the thorough-going participation in "every profession and kind of work", "every phase of the civil rights movement" (black militancy?), "every phase of the peace movement" (sabotaging our country's war effort?) is perhaps another matter. There is no prior guarantee that the movements afoot in our day are the christian and Franciscan answer to today's problems. There is room, therefore, for a judicious selection of goals and means; the Franciscan task is not to join whatever movement happens to be afoot, but to apply and even intrude his christian conscience into this world's affairs and give them direction.

Fr. Vitale notes that "the clericalization of our Order has limited our witness." In this the Order suffers from the same malady as the church at large; the two are in the same state, having evolved in parallel ways, or perhaps even one identical way. And in an institution whose founder desired to be totally submissive to the lord pope, perhaps this is not reprehensible. But this suggests that, granted the overall validity of the cries for updating, the Order's problem is one with that of the church. Yet much of the impetus and impact of the Order's early growth was precisely in the direction of church reform. If the Order is truly live and active, the same should be true today.

And in this perhaps can be found the key problem in the movement for renewal: how does one lead the leaders? There are without doubt many in the Order who desire to move in the directions indicated in Fr. Vitale's article. But since in the nature of things that movement must be collective as well as individual, the question of renewal and reform of the Order's constitutions becomes crucial. To this we might apply Fr. Vitale's warning: "If we fail in this we are doomed to virtual extinction and ineffectiveness. . . ." At least many within and without the Order might reach that conclusion.

So it appears that in the matter of renewal we are committed to

looking to Rome. And the news from there has been only occasionally hopeful. We would like to be kept informed of the progress of the recently established "commissions" to study various problems that affect several religious orders and congregations. From my own particular viewpoint, several changes on the way cannot but be gratifying: recognition of subsidiarity, an openness to a greater variety of apostolates, universal suffrage. But one gathers that these are considered "concessions"; they are things that are permitted, but not wholeheartedly embraced.

On the other hand, can we honestly expect that our institutions are capable of so radical change? Is the Order detached, even from its own institution and structure? Can it abandon its commitments to the "institutional" church? Can it witness to the poverty of Christ by dispossessing itself freely and lovingly? It would perhaps be safest to reply that the answers are not clear.

We hear continually from Rome that changes can be made "only by competent authority", and "according to the norms of the Church." I think the following is typical: "Let there be no foot-dragging about implementing Council decisions; but especially let there be no undue intemperance or harmful haste in ill-considered change of ancient rites, customs, methods and discipline." And "renewal cannot be understood as a certain indulgent assent to the fragile and voluble mentality of this world which is floundering in uncertainty without transcendent goals." (Card. Annoniutti to the Gen. Chapter, O.F.M.Conv., July, 1966) Those who assess the mentality of the world and the role of the Order differently will likely grow impatient with leading the leaders from within. In that case, we might in the near future find the Franciscan charism more active outside the Order than within it. Not that spirit and enthusiasm are destined to die within the Order, but perhaps we need some such stimulus to prod us into renewal; permissions and concessions are not the answer.

#### 4. Bro. Jacques Schiesser, Taizé Community, Chicago

Father Vitale's paper will be helpful in the effort of up-dating the Franciscan life; the remarks that it suggested to me are not meant to be negative but complementary.

Each renewal of lasting importance in the life of the Church has not only answered specific needs of a given time but has been a new discovery of the Gospel in its fullness, in its freshness and in its power. Men and women were again siezed by the love of the living Christ. They accepted anew His friendship, with its free and demanding gifts. In them, because of their intimate relationship with Him, Christ was present and active. So their answer to needs of their contemporary society was not theirs but Christ's.

This return to the Gospel, not to escape from the world, but to let Christ be the answer, is only presupposed in Father Vitale's paper. I wonder if we can be content with assuming that it is there, if then the risks of distorting the Gospel or giving only half of the answer are not too great.

We have to find again the center of the Gospel. I am afraid that to say "the dignity and brotherhood of man, the human rights of all, the search for individual liberty and every opportunity for development are at the core of Gospel message" (p. 9) reveals a narrow view of the Gospel, a reduction to a collective moralism that is on the same level than the old individual moralism we have come from. Values are part of the Gospel, but they are consequences of the encounter between Christ and the disciples, Christ and the world.

This confrontation with Christ, that lets him speak and address man has to be in the forefront of our renewal, if we want to be not only poor but the poor of Christ.

The prophets of the Old Testament were not relevant because they knew the situation of their contemporary world and were involved in history but because in this context they accepted to be questioned by the word of God, by the God who had revealed himself in a definite history, in which they wanted to be participating.

This leads me to my second remark; to be positive about the gift of creation and the course of the world is a great contribution of Franciscanism. This acceptance however is not passive. It involves an active critical attitude, discerning what is good and from God and being thankful for it, but refusing certain structures, certain fads, certain ideologies. The answer of the religious won't fit totally into what people expect, there will always be a discon-

tinuity between the need of the world and the response of the Church. We are asked to see both the good and the demonic in the need. This leads to a definite "foolishness" in the eyes of the world because we do not go along automatically, but are we not fools for Christ.

The third remark would illustrate this foolishness. We are fools because we refuse to be trapped in the myths of productivity or activism. We are fools because we accept to "waste time" with God, to waste time with our brothers, to waste time with those whom we meet. We are no more bound to the illusion that man is worth only what he produces or what he does. We know that *being* with Christ, *being* with others is a great value. In this paper, I missed this insistence on prayer, whatever form it would take, this insistence on brotherly love that makes different from the ideals of our culture but in the same time attractive to those who search the full and fresh meaning of life.



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